SPEAKING UP-SPEAKING OUT: WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO PREPARE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS TO ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES?

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The early childhood profession regards advocacy as a professional and ethical responsibility yet little is known about advocacy instructional practices in teacher education programs. This study surveyed selected early childhood teacher educators who currently prepare undergraduate preservice professionals in two- and four-year institutions throughout the United States to identify and evaluate the existing advocacy training practices in preservice education. The study was designed to: (a) determine what leaders in the field of early childhood believe constitutes appropriate advocacy training for preprofessionals, (b) describe the advocacy activities of teacher educators, (c) determine if there is a difference in the advocacy instructional practices of two- and four-year institutions, and (d) recommend a model for advocacy in preprofessional programs.

The participants included 607 teacher educators who responded to a mailed questionnaire and 14 leaders of early childhood professional organizations who participated in telephone interviews. Participants represented forty-eight states and all geographic regions of the United States.

Results indicate that teacher educators and leaders believe advocacy instruction is important in preparation programs. The most frequently included advocacy

activities are professionalism and understanding the professional role. Advocacy skills and strategies focused on public policy were included the least. Findings show that teacher educators participate in a variety of advocacy activities although few participate in public policy activities. No statistically significant differences were found between two- and four-year institutions in advocacy instructional practices. Based on study data, the researcher developed the Brunson Model for Advocacy Instruction in order to provide the profession with a consistent and sequenced approach to advocacy instruction.

Recommendations for future research include: investigation of effective strategies for teaching advocacy; a study of the developmental nature of advocacy; and a study of the Brunson Model for Advocacy Instruction to determine the model's effectiveness in preparing professionals who will have the ability to speak up and speak out for children and families.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

Table Page

Table Page

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure Page

Figure Page

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The new millennium marks a time when professionals from the schoolhouse to the White House debate the needs of the children, our youngest citizens (Jacobson, 1998). Child advocates from all walks of life are proclaiming the critical importance of the early years on children's lives and their future success in school and in life (Carnegie Corporation, 1994; Kotulak, 1996; Shore, 1997). Since 1990 when former President Bush, in his State of the Union Address, announced the national education goals, political rhetoric has focused on the needs of young children.

> Education is the one investment that means more for our future because it means the most for our children. Real improvement in our schools is not simply a matter of spending more: It's a matter of asking more--expecting more--of our schools, our teachers, of our kids, of our parents, and ourselves...By the year 2000 every child must start school ready to learn...(Bush, G. H. 1990, p. 3)

In 1997 Mann reported that a voter survey conducted by the Coalition for America's Children indicated that children's issues ranked above Social Security and Medicare in importance in determining how voters would cast their votes in the 1996 presidential election. "The overriding message of the survey...is that voters want government to play a role in improving the conditions in which our children live" (Mann, 1997, p. E3). In January 1998, when President Clinton made his State of the Union

Address, the interest in children had expanded to include support for working families in need of child care. During the 2000 presidential campaign, education was one of the most important issues to the voting public (McCaleb, 2000).

Today political candidates are including early childhood education issues in campaign speeches and advancing proposals for improving conditions for children and families (Kagan, 1999). "Republicans desire a better result. We believe that every child in this land should have access to a high quality, indeed, a world-class education, and we're determined to meet that goal" (Republican National Committee, 2000, p. 1). The 2000 Democratic Platform included the following statement:

> ...Democrats understand that ensuring every child the highest quality education is essential if America is to remain strong and competitive in today's economy. That's why Al Gore's very first campaign speech was about education and that's why Al Gore will make education his top domestic priority...(Democratic National Committee, 2000, p. 4)

Congressional leaders are implementing policies such as the State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) enacted in 1997, for the children and families of America. In the first session of the 106th Congress, legislation was passed that will impact Head Start and other major children's programs in America. In fiscal year 2000, Head Start received an additional $5.2 billion and funding was increased for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, and the Childhood Immunizations Program (Children's Defense Fund, 2000d). This increased funding and public focus on programs that impact the well being of children is the result of more than

a decade of work by child advocacy groups (Willer, 1998). Concerns about the education and well being of our youngest citizens have put children at the center of the political arena in the United States.

Renewed Interest in Children

Renewed political and media interest in the needs of America's children emerged after the 1989 national education summit convened and set an education agenda to improve the public schools (Kagan & Cohen, 1996; Morrison, 2001). Concerned about the education of the nation's children, the governors of all 50 states, led by President Bill Clinton who was Governor of Arkansas at the time, met with former President George Bush to determine a way to increase the educational success for all children by the year 2000. The group concluded that National Education Goals were needed. National standards for education were enacted by the 103rd congress of the United States at the second session and signed into law by President Clinton in March 1994 as the Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994 (National Education Goals History, 2000). By 1994 when Congress enacted Goals 2000, the original six National Education Goals were expanded to include eight ambitious goals to improve education in the nation's schools by the year 2000. Congress labeled goal one the School Readiness goal. Goal 1 of the National Education Goals is stated in the Educate America Act of 1994 as follows:

(1) SCHOOL READINESS

(A) By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.

(B) The objectives for this goal are that—

(i) all children will have access to high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs that help prepare children for school;

(ii) every parent in the United States will be a child's first teacher and devote time each day to helping such parent's preschool child learn, and parents will have access to the training and support parents need; and

(iii) children will receive the nutrition, physical activity experiences, and health care needed to arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies, and to maintain the mental alertness necessary to be prepared to learn, and the number of low-birthweight babies will be significantly reduced through enhanced prenatal health systems...(Goals 2000: Educate America Act, 1994, Sec. 102)

The first national goal has generated a new emphasis on the needs of young children and their families.

The National Educational Goals Panel identified four key dimensions of school readiness, our nation's first education goal: physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, language usage, and the mastering of learning styles that allow children to approach new tasks and challenges effectively. Currently too many children are entering school not ready

to learn, jeopardizing later academic achievement. (Carnegie Corporation, 1994, p. 1)

The prestigious Carnegie Foundation formed The Carnegie Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children to determine what would be needed to have every child ready to learn by the year 2000. Ernest Boyer, who was the President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, led the study to determine what the nation must do to ensure that all children are ready for success in school by the year 2000. In *Ready to Learn,* (1991) Boyer outlined the plan for a national effort to develop programs in every community that would have all nineteen million preschoolers ready to learn when they entered school. The plan included seven steps: a healthy start, empowered parents, quality preschools, a responsive workplace, television that adds educational enrichment for young children, neighborhoods that support development and learning, and connections across the generations to support the growth and development of young children (1991). Boyer declared that "...In our search for excellence in education, children must come first. Policymakers simply must look beyond the schoolhouse door and consider what is happening to childhood itself..." (Boyer, 1991, p. 5).

The *National Education Goals Report of 1999* stated that the National Education Goals were successful because they encouraged greater progress in education and moved the nation forward (National Education Goals Panel, 1999). The report cited the broad spectrum of support for the goals and the work of educators, parents, students, business and community leaders, and policymakers toward the attainment of the national goals. In

the Key Findings of 1999, significant improvements were reported for Goal 1, Ready to Learn. Gains were reported in the following areas associated with Goal 1:

- The proportion of infants born with one or more of four health risks decreased.
- The percentage of 2-year-olds who have been fully immunized against preventable childhood diseases has increased.
- The percentage of families who are reading and telling stories to their children on a regular basis has increased.
- The gap in preschool participation between 3- to 5-year-olds from high- and low-income families has decreased. (National Education Goals Panel, 1999,p. 7-9)

Although progress has been made in reaching the national goals, according to the Children's Defense Fund (1999b), not one of the goals has been achieved.

A second political event that created renewed interest in the children and families of America is the focus on the technological advances and research of the neurosciences. Since 1989 when former President Bush officially proclaimed the 1990s the "Decade of the Brain" (Bush, G. H., 1990b),

> we have seen an unprecedented explosion of information on how the human brain works. Thousands of research projects, books, magazine cover stories, and television specials regale us with new facts and figures, colorful PET scans, and at times, suspiciously simple ways to improve our memories, prevent Alzheimer's, and make our babies geniuses. (Wolf, P. & Brandt, R., 1998, p. 8)

This explosion of information about the development of the human brain has generated new interest in the care and education of young children (Diamond & Hopson, 1998; Kotulak, 1996; Ramey & Ramey, 1999; Shore, 1997; Sylwester, 1995).

In *Starting Points,* the 1994 report of the Carnegie Task Force on Meeting the Needs of America's Children, the authors declared that "The first three years of life appear to be a crucial 'starting point'--a period particularly sensitive to the protective mechanisms of parental and family support" (Carnegie Corporation, 1994, p. 2). Recent findings in neuroscience support the importance of the first three years of a child's life (Carnegie Corporation, 1994; Kotulak, 1996; Ramey & Ramey, 1999; Shore, 1997). Ramey and Ramey (1999) identified the following major findings in neurobiology that impact childhood development

- The brain never stops changing; it continues to evolve throughout our lives.
- The most intense period of brain growth is the first three years of life.
- At age three, a child's brain is twice as active as that of an adult.
- How a child's brain develops is a complex blend of inheritance and experience.
- Each brain can develop in many different ways depending on many factors, such as genetics, experience, relationships, health, and nutrition.
- The quality of relationships and experiences in the first three years has a deep and lasting impact on how the brain gets "wired".
- The early wiring of the brain sets the foundation for development in every aspect of life.
- Brain development and behavior are bound together. They dynamically and continually influence each other. (Ramey & Ramey, 1999, p. 8)

The brain research supports the concept of the critical importance of the early years of life and has turned both political and media attention to the needs of young children. The “...intensive interest in early brain development ...reflects growing concern about the status of children in America-not only their academic achievement, but also their health, safety, and overall well-being” (Shore, 1997, p. 12). In the spring of 1997, *Newsweek* (Spring/Summer, 1997) and *Time Magazine* (February 3, 1997) both published special editions highlighting the new information on brain development as it relates to the early years of a child’s life. In the February 3, 1997, *Time Magazine* Special Edition, "How a Child's Brain Develops and What it Means for Child Care and Welfare Reform," Nash declared that "...If parents and policymakers don't pay attention to the conditions under which this delicate process takes place, we will all suffer the consequences-starting around the year 2010" (Nash, 1997, p. 56). The *Newsweek* Special Edition (1997) stated that:

> ...In the pages that follow, we chart the explosion of scientific information about how infants learn to speak and move, the break-through in brain research and the new thinking on how parents, grandparents-indeed, all of us-can help our youngest citizens get off to a strong and healthy start. (Smith, 1997, p.4)

The magazine declared that "...Politicians from the White House on down are professing new interest in early-childhood development"(Smith, 1997, p.4). In April 1997, Rob Reiner and a cast of celebrities including Tom Hanks and Billy Crystal, launched the “I Am Your Child” Campaign on the ABC television network during prime viewing time. The “I Am Your Child” Campaign is “a national public awareness and engagement

campaign, created by the Reiner Foundation, to help people understand the importance of the new brain research and its implications for our children's lifelong healthy development" (Families and Work Institute, 1997, p. 14). This widespread dissemination of brain research information has increased public interest in the needs of young children and their families in the early years of the child's life.

Support for Early Care and Education

The Goals 2000 initiative and the public interest in brain based programs for young children has prompted child advocacy groups and early childhood professional organizations to work to keep children's issues on the political agenda. Child advocacy groups, such as the Children's Defense Fund and Connect for Kids, hope to gain the support necessary to provide appropriate care and early experiences for all children in America (Edelman, 2000; Mann, 1997).

The United States is one of the few industrialized nations that does not have an organized system of services for children and families (Carnegie Corporation, 1994; Kagan & Cohen, 1996; Zigler, Kagan, & Hall, 1996). Without a coordinated system for early care and education, it is difficult to ensure that all young children in America will receive the quality care and education that is necessary for their future success (Kagan & Cohen, 1996). The benefits of high quality early care and education intervention programs for children from low-income families are widely distributed to legislators and others who work to influence public policy for children. Benefits of early care and preschool education programs include:

- Fewer placements in special education and lower retention rates (Lazar & Darlington, 1982).
- Enter school better prepared to learn (Entwisle, 1995; Peisner-Feinberg, 1999; Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998).
- Fewer reports of later delinquency and antisocial behavior (Karoley et al., 1998; Schweinhart & Weikert, 1993).
- Higher levels of achievement and better social adjustment (Barnett, 1995; Campbell et al., 1999; Karoley et al., 1998; Peisner-Feinberg, 1999; Peth-Pierce, 1998).

Barnett (1995) in a review of the research on long-term effects of early childhood programs on cognitive and school outcomes concluded that "across all studies, the findings were relatively uniform and constitute overwhelming evidence that early childhood care and education can produce sizable improvements in school success"(p. 40). In "The Children of the Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Go to School" (Peisner-Feinberg, 1999), researchers found that the quality of center-based child care in America is important for all children not just children from low-income families. Children who experience high quality child care perform better on measures of both cognitive ability and social behavior than those who are in centers that provide a low quality of child care (Peisner-Feinberg, 1999). *The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development* (NICHD) *Study of Early Child Care* (Peth-Pierce, 1998) found that high quality care is related to higher levels of school readiness and low quality care resulted in lower cognitive and language ability and lower school readiness scores. In

1998, the third annual Stand for Children Day, an initiative led by the Children's Defense Fund, highlighted the child care needs of the families of American children and the importance of a quality child care experience. The purpose of the annual Stand for Children event is to focus the attention of the nation on the critical issues facing the children and families in America.

Adults at all levels are urged by children's advocacy groups and professional organizations to take action to improve the health, education and well-being of the children of America. The Carnegie Corporation released *Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of our Youngest Citizens* in 1994 declaring that "the nation's children under the age of three and their families are in trouble, and their plight worsens every day"(Carnegie Corporation, 1994, p. 1). A series of books by authors, such as Jonathan Kozol (1995), has focused the nation's attention on the American children who live in pitiful circumstances. Kozol writes about the unequal educational opportunities available to children across the United States as well as the extreme poverty that many families endure in the nation's cities (Kozol, 1988, 1991, 1995, 2000). Former First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton (1996) wrote *It Takes a Village*, to focus attention on the needs of children and families in America and to suggest ways for communities to begin helping those that are in need of assistance. Each year the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) issues *The State of America's Children* detailing the status of children and families in the United States and entreating Americans to *Leave No Child Behind* (Children's Defense Fund, 1998, 1999b, 2000d). In 1995, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) issued a position statement titled *A Call to Action on Behalf of*

Children and Families declaring that "our nation can and must do better to create opportunities that help all children and families succeed"(1995). The White House, Congress, state legislative bodies, local governing bodies and communities across the nation are challenged to move beyond partisan politics to work together to support young children and their families.

Advocates Work for Children

The interest in the well being of the nation's children has generated widespread concern about the plight of all children in America. Politicians, celebrities, professional organizations and child advocates are calling for changes in public policies to ensure that the needs of all American children are being met. CDF, the Coalition for America's Children, Connect for Kids, the National Parent Teacher Association, NAEYC, the League of Women Voter's and the Child Welfare League of America are among the national advocacy groups that have been instrumental in the passage of policies that benefit children and families.

CDF has been a leading advocate for the children of America for more than twenty-five years. Led by Marian Wright Edelman, CDF is a private, nonprofit organization supported by foundations, corporations, grants, and individual donations.

> The mission of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is to *Leave No Child Behind*® and to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start*, and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. CDF provides a strong, effective voice for *all* the children of America who cannot vote, lobby, or speak for themselves.

> We pay particular attention to the needs of poor and minority children and those with disabilities. CDF educates the nation about the needs of children and encourages preventive investments before they get sick or into trouble, drop out of school, or suffer family breakdown (Children's Defense Fund, 1999b, front cover).

In 1996, the Children's Defense Fund organized a rally at the Washington Monument designed to "focus public attention and political power on the economic and social needs of young Americans"(Weiner, June 2, 1996, p. 30). The New York Times (June 2, 1996) reported that a crowd of 200,000 children, parents, teachers and religious leaders came from all over the country for the Stand for Children Day to focus the national spotlight on the needs of children. At the rally, Edelman encouraged all Americans to be advocates for children; "Each of us can do more and better to protect and improve the quality of life for our children. We can be a better America" (Weiner, 1996, p. 30). Each year, on or near June 1, rallies are held across the nation to focus attention on particular needs of children. The following issues have been the focus of the Stand for Children rallies:

- 1997 Stand for Healthy Children
- 1998 Stand for Quality Child Care and After-School Programs
- 1999 Stand for Children Day '99: Ready to Learn, Ready to Succeed
- 2000 Stand For Children Day 2000: Building Safer and Healthier Communities for All Children
- 2001 Stand For Children Day 2001: Building Our Voice and Vision for All Children

- 2002 Stand for Children Day 2002: Strengthen America: Invest in Early Education (Stand for Children, 2002).

The Stand for Children events across America help to ensure that each year a major issue that affects the health and well being of children and families is the center of media attention. The local events, planned for the Stand for Children Day, help advocates enlist the support of teachers, parents, business leaders and the local community to work at the grassroots level to create interest in making positive changes for children.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children is one of the leading professional associations that advocates for the needs of young children. Established in 1926, NAEYC has 103,000 members. The organization is devoted to the development of young children from birth through age eight (NAEYC, 2000). For almost seventy-five years, early childhood professionals have joined NAEYC to work on behalf of the needs and rights of young children. NAEYC has collaborated with many advocacy organizations over the years to promote the well-being of children and families. According to Kagan (1989), the NAEYC position statement on developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) (Bredekamp, 1987) helped unify the early childhood profession and contributed to coalition building among the various strands of the profession. DAP has become familiar rhetoric in reports supporting high quality early childhood programs both within the field and in the business community. In 1996, NAEYC launched the Children's Champion Campaign declaring that "Today, more than ever, young children need you to be their champion-someone committed to making the world a more caring place that offers every child and family the opportunity to thrive"

(NAEYC, 1995, p.58). NAEYC also sponsors the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAECP). NAECP set rigorous standards for quality in early care facilities for children and families. Annually NAEYC celebrates Week of the Young Child across the nation to focus public awareness on early childhood education issues and the needs of young children and their families.

The work of child advocates and child advocacy coalitions have been instrumental in the passage of policies that benefit children and families. These benefits include more programs for children and more resources for children and families (Children's Defense Fund, 1998; Kagan, 1991; Osborn, 1991; Payzant, 1992; Willer, 1998). Some of the most notable policies enacted for children include:

- Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. This act eliminated child labor in all industries that shipped goods in interstate commerce. Set sixteen as minimum age for most jobs (Osborn, 1991).
- Project Head Start 1965. Head Start is a federally funded intervention program for children and families. Millions of children and families receive social services, employment and training opportunities through Head Start programs (Kagan, 1991).
- Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. This act established the rights of handicapped children, from age 3 to age 21, to an appropriate education at public expense. Children with disabling conditions were given a federal right to education (Payzant, 1992).

- Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. Although this is an unpaid leave, parents can now take time off without losing their job when children become seriously ill (Children's Defense Fund, 1998).
- Early Head Start for Infants and Toddlers 1994. The 1994 Head Start Reauthorization Act established a new Early Head Start program for low-income families with infants and toddlers. The mission of the program is to promote healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women, enhance the development of very young children, and promote healthy family functioning (Children's Defense Fund, 2000b).
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997. Section C of IDEA includes provisions to encourage states to expand early intervention services for infants and toddlers who would be at risk of substantial developmental delay if they did not receive early intervention services. One of the purposes of the act is to develop a system that provides early intervention services to infants and toddlers (National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, 1998).
- State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) of 1997. CHIP will provide 5 million children health insurance over a ten year period. The program expands Medicaid programs and provides insurance for children. More children now have access to health care when they are sick (Children's Defense Fund, 1998).

Although all policies that benefit children and families also affect the education of young children, the following policies had a direct impact on the education of young children:

- Increased state investments in early education programs 1985-1995; including various levels of funding for prekindergarten programs in 41 states (Schulman, Blank, & Ewen, 1999).
- Goals 2000 of 1989. The first national goal highlighted the important connections between early care and education and later educational achievement (Kagan & Cohen, 1996).
- Child Care and Development Block Grant of 1991. This grant to states from the federal government helps low-income families find quality, affordable child care so they work (NAEYC, 1999).
- Federal grants called the 21st Century Community Learning Centers to enable schools to establish after-school programs, 1999. Grants are awarded to rural and inner-city public schools, to enable them to implement school-based learning centers to provide safe, drug-free, supervised and cost-effective after-school, weekend or summer activities for children, youth and their families (Twenty-first Century Community Learning Centers, 1999).

Organizations and coalitions that work for young children and families have made some significant gains in policies for children and families. Millions of children have benefited from Head Start since it was enacted in 1965 and all children with disabling conditions are now entitled to a free public education. Despite the efforts of advocacy groups, every day in America millions of children continue to live in poverty, suffer from a lack of medical care and attend poor quality early care and education facilities and schools (Children's Defense Fund, 1998).

State of the Children

The current political rhetoric is clearly focused on young children. Children and children's programs were mentioned in the acceptance speeches of both the Republican and Democratic candidates for president. Governor George W. Bush (Bush, 2000) in his August 3 acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention 2000 stated that "...now is the time to make Head Start an early learning program to teach all our children to read and renew the promise of America's public schools"(p. 4). At the Democratic National Convention 2000 on August 17, Vice President Al Gore (Gore, 2000) urged the American public to "...move toward universal health coverage, step by step, starting with all children. Let's get all children covered by 2004...Now let's set a specific new goal for the first decade of the 21st century: high-quality, universal pre-school, available to every child in every family, all across this nation"(pp. 6-7). While the political rhetoric may be focused on the needs of children and families, actual legislative support is heavily dependent on the current political climate. At times there have been significant increases in the number of children's services funded at both the federal and state level, just to have budget cuts in the next legislative session (Kagan, 1994).

Although child advocacy groups have been successful in keeping the needs of America's children in the forefront of the political agenda, long standing concerns about the welfare of America's young children continue to plague child advocates. Billions of dollars have been allocated for child health, child care and other new investments for children over the past ten years yet today in America:

- 13.5 million children in America live in poverty (http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/nccp). For 2000, poverty is defined as an annual income at or below $17,050 for a family of four (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000).
- 11.9 million American children are without health insurance (Children's Defense Fund, 2000d).
- In 1998, 3.4 million children lived in families that experienced hunger (Children's Defense Fund, 2000d).
- More than a third of the homeless Americans who were in shelters in 1997 were families with children (Children's Defense Fund, 1998).
- Nearly 3 million cases of child abuse or neglect were reported in 1997 (Child Welfare League of America, 2000a).

According to the Children's Defense Fund (2000d), two-thirds of mothers of children under six work outside the home which has created an increase in the number of families who need quality child care. Child care is a major challenge to all families in America today with millions needing child care and after school care for their children. More families need quality care for their children but we do not have a unified system of care and education for all children in this country. The need for available, affordable, quality child care in America is great:

- 13 million preschool children spend part of their day in child care (Children's Defense Fund, 2000d).

- In 1995 among preschool children under 6 years old who were cared for someone other than a parent, 35% of two-year olds, 55% of four-year olds and 64% of five-year olds were in a center-based program (Hofferth, Shauman, & Henke, 1998).
- 32 states do not require teachers in child care centers to have any early childhood training prior to serving children (Children's Defense Fund, 1998).
- 5 million school-age children are unsupervised by an adult after school (Children's Defense Fund, 1998).
- Violent crimes by juveniles peak between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m., the hour after school is out (National Center for Juvenile Justice, 1999).

Americans claim to value children, yet American children continue to suffer in a nation that is considered one of the richest in the world (Children's Defense Fund, 1999b)**.** Despite positive changes in policies for children and families, American children today continue to encounter a variety of social problems that interfere with healthy growth and development. Many American children live in dangerous and violent communities and are growing up in very difficult situations. Every day in America there are children who face poverty, a lack of health care, child abuse, inferior child care, and unequal educational benefits. Children who do not have a voice in the political arena continue to need advocates who will fight to make a difference in their lives and will work for policies that will ensure that all children will have the tools necessary for success in the 21st century.

Poverty

In *Poverty Matters* (1997), Sherman reports that in 1996 14.5 million U.S. children, more than one in every five, lived below the poverty threshold. The federal poverty threshold established by the U.S. Census Bureau for 1999 is $17,029. for a family of four (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000). The 1999 child poverty data shows that the poverty rate dropped to 12.1 million children living in poverty, but as the number of children living in poverty declined, the number of poor children in working families has significantly increased and continues to climb (Annie E. Casey, 2000). The Children's Defense Fund (September 26,2000a) reports that a record 77% of poor children live in families where someone is working. In *Child Poverty in the United States* (2000), the National Center for Children in Poverty stated that "over 13 million children live in poverty and the number of children living in poverty has increased by 3 million since 1979. The child poverty rate grew by 15 percent from 1979 to 1998" (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2000, p. 1). Children's Defense Fund founder and president, Marian Wright Edelman, said,

> It is shameful that more children are living in poverty now than 20 years ago. When has there ever been a better time for this nation to invest in its children than when it has huge federal and state surpluses, billions in tobacco settlements, billions in welfare reform money, millions in unspent child health money in the states, and 8 years of prosperity? If not now, when? (Children's Defense Fund, September 26,2000a, p.1)

America is considered to be a rich nation yet the child poverty rate is higher than in any other Western industrialized nation (Sherman, 1997). The *2000 Kids Count Data Online* (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2000) report stated that the United States has the highest child poverty rate among the 17 developed countries studied in the Luxembourg Income Study. A United Nations study also found that among industrialized nations the Russian Federation was the only nation with a higher child poverty rate than the United States (United Nations, 2000). Sherman (1997) summarized the ranking of the United States among other industrialized nations in the following statement:

> A child in the United States is 60 percent more likely than a Canadian child, two times more likely than a British child and three times more likely than a French or German child to live in poverty. Research has shown that the chief reason for these wide differences is that other nations have strong policies for boosting family income. These policies include making good quality child care affordable for every family; generous parental leave for working parents; cash, food, and housing assistance for all needy families; and child allowances and guaranteed child support for all families regardless of income. These policies add up to help families hold family-supporting jobs and lift their children out of poverty. (Sherman, 1997, p. 33)

Children who live in families with very limited resources frequently do without the basics of food, clothing and shelter. The following studies show that growing up in poverty is one of the greatest predictors of problems for America's children (1997):

- Poverty negatively impacts child health problems more than race or living in a single parent family (Montgomery, 1996).
- Infant death rate among poverty stricken families is higher than for single mothers, mothers who dropped out of high school, or smoked cigarettes during pregnancy (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 1995).
- Children who live in poverty are more likely to fall behind in school than are minority children, children in specific regions of the country, children who have a teen parent, or living in a one-parent home (Kennedy, 1996).
- Poverty is a more powerful correlate of IQ at age 5 than maternal education, ethnicity, and growing up in a female-headed family (Duncan, G., 1994).

Hodgkinson (1991) reported that America's children are truly an endangered species because of the socioeconomic problems they face in their daily lives.

Health Coverage

Lack of health coverage is another major problem facing children and families in America today. According to the Children's Defense Fund (2000d), almost 12 million children age 18 and under are uninsured. This is the largest number of uninsured children ever reported by the U.S. Census Bureau. More than 87% of uninsured children have at least one parent who works (Children's Defense Fund, 2000d). According to the Child Welfare League of America (2000b), approximately 70 percent of all uninsured children in the United States now qualify for public health coverage through Medicaid or the State Children's Health Program now referred to as SCHIP. Despite the high number of children who are eligible for health care, there are as many as 4.7 million uninsured

children across the United States that are eligible for Medicaid but are not enrolled and not receiving medical care (Center for Public Policy Priorities, 2000).

The State Children's Health Program was enacted in 1997 by Congress to provide health insurance and appropriate medical care for low-income children.

> CHIP was the largest expansion of insurance coverage for children since the enactment of Medicaid in 1965. The CHIP statute authorized $48 billion to the states over 10 years and gave them three options to increase health coverage for low-income children: expand Medicaid, establish a separate state program, or do both. (Children's Defense Fund, 2000d, p. 27)

Most SCHIP plans cover regular checkups, immunizations, eyeglasses, doctor visits, prescription drugs, and hospital care. The SCHIP program enables states to insure children from working families with incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid but too low to afford private health insurance (Health Care Financing Administration, 2000). Many eligible families work in businesses that have dropped all insurance benefits or the employee contribution is so high that most low-wage workers cannot afford the insurance offered through their employment (Child Welfare League of America, 2000b).

The state of Texas is ranked last in insurance coverage for children with 25.3 percent of the children without health coverage. Arizona and Texas share last place with Arizona having 25.9 percent of the children in the state not covered. The state of Vermont ranks first in the nation with only 6.4 percent of children without health coverage (Children's Defense Fund, 2000c). Texas has 1.4 million uninsured children in the state. Of those who are not insured over half, 600,000 children, are living in families

with incomes at or below the federal poverty income line and just under 500,000 uninsured children fall in the CHIP eligibility range. Over half of the uninsured children in Texas could be covered by Medicaid.

The National Center for Health Statistics Report in July 1997 stated that children who are uninsured are more likely to suffer from recurring problems, miss more days of school and may even suffer permanent damage due to untreated infections. Uninsured children are six times as likely as insured children to go without needed medical care (Child Welfare League of America, 2000b). Texas, as well as other states, needs to continue to revise policies and procedures related to securing Medicaid and CHIP in order to make access more equitable for all Texas families.

Child Abuse

The United States has the highest rate of child abuse in the industrialized world. In 1997, 3.1 million children were reported abused (Child Welfare League of America, 1999). The Administration for Children and Families (Child Welfare League of America, 1999) reported that more than half of the recorded cases of child abuse involved children 7 years of age or younger, and 25 percent were younger than 4 years old. The majority of victims of neglect and medical neglect were younger than 8 years old, while the majority of victims of other types of maltreatment were age 8 or older (Child Welfare League of America, 1999). The U.S. Advisory Commission on Child Abuse and Neglect reported that 2,000 children die each year from abuse and neglect and most of these children are under the age of four. Child Abuse, including battering and neglect by parents, is the leading cause of death for young children in this country. Perhaps the most shocking

statistic of all is that most of the 2,000 deaths attributed to abuse occur in cases that have previously been reported to the Child Welfare agency. In New York, two children die from abuse and neglect each week and, in one third of the cases where children were killed, the neglect of the Child Welfare Administration either allowed or contributed to the tragic deaths of the children (Stoesz, & Karger, 1996).

The reports on the well-being of the children in America reveal a need for continued advocacy efforts for the children and families of America. The needs of children are often overlooked when policy decisions are made that affect the quality of life of America's young citizens. America is the only large industrialized nation that does not provide for the basic needs of all children (Sherman, 1997; Children's Defense Fund, 2000a; Carnegie Corporation, 1994). The Children's Defense Fund (2000a) reports that among 23 industrialized countries, the United States is the only country that does not provide the child safety net policies of universal health insurance/health care, paid maternal/parental leave at childbirth and family allowance/child dependency grants for families. In *Starting Points* (1994) the Carnegie Corporation declared that "Our policies contrast sharply with those of most other industrialized countries...the Europeans are moving toward paid leaves for new parents and a range of subsidized child care options for toddlers" (Carnegie Corporation, 1994, p. 9). Sherman (1997) summarizes the problem by saying,

> To our shame, America lacks a prowork, profamily policy to stop poverty...America must value families by ensuring that all families can gain the

education, wages, health benefits, and other opportunities they require to feed, house, and nurture their children. (p. 33)

Children who do not have a voice in government need adults who will advocate for their needs in society. Although many groups of adults are advocating for children and families, early childhood professionals who see firsthand the everyday issues facing children and their families are uniquely qualified to address the needs of today's children (Lombardi, 1988; Willer, 1998).

Professional Call to Advocate for Children

Boyer (1991) reported that “America is losing sight of its children" (1991, p.3). The decisions made in the political arena are placing the lowest priority on the needs of the children who are the future of this nation. Boyer (1992) called for the organization of a united effort to work for the well-being of the children. Kagan (1991) and Kagan and Cohen (1996) also encourage those that are interested in the early care and education of young children to unite and work together for the improved care of all children. The escalating needs of children and the renewed interest in the critical importance of the early years of a child’s life increase the need for adults who care about children to become advocates for the children.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children has a code of ethical conduct and statement of commitment that acknowledges the obligation of early childhood professionals to advocate for children (Feeney & Kipnis, 1998). The statement of commitment includes the following: “To the best of my ability I will: Serve as an advocate for children, their families, and their teachers in community and society...”

(1998, p. 6). Other leaders in the field of education join NAEYC in an effort to make teaching a recognized profession just as doctors and lawyers are considered members of a profession. These leaders also focus on the need for professionals to be advocates for the profession and involved in the moral dimensions of teaching (Danielson, 1996; Fullan, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1992). Although the early childhood profession recognizes the need for all professionals to be advocates for children and families, the profession does not provide adequate training or a unified model for advocacy (Almy, 1985; Cahill, 1986; Daniel, 1996; Fennimore, 1989; Whitebook & Ginsburg, 1984; Willer, 1998).

NAEYC has set guidelines for the preparation of early childhood professionals. The guidelines for preparation of early childhood professionals (NAEYC, 1996) were endorsed by the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) and the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC/CEC). The NAEYC guidelines for baccalaureate and advanced programs are approved by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and are used by higher education institutions seeking NCATE accreditation of their early childhood programs. The NAEYC guidelines contain a professionalism component that includes preparation of professionals who “serve as advocates on behalf of young children and their families, improved quality of programs and services for young children, and enhanced professional status and working conditions for early childhood educators” (NAEYC, 1996, p. 20). The profession regards advocacy as a professional and ethical responsibility yet there is no clearly identified plan for preparing early childhood professionals for the advocacy role. Fennimore (1989) stated that "The current paucity of effective mechanisms for

bridging the classroom and the policy-making process poses a critical challenge to creative early childhood professionals of today and tomorrow" (p.6). According to Willer (1998)..."Advocacy is often not well-addressed in professional preparation courses, and many successful advocates have learned the process "on the job"...(p. 35). Yet "...advocacy on behalf of children and the profession is a responsibility of each and every member of the early childhood profession" (Willer, 1998, p. 30).

The profession has an ethical code of conduct proclaiming advocacy for children and families. Leaders in the field of early care and education entreat all early childhood professionals to advocate for children and families. Clearly, the children in America need more advocates to speak up for their rights and to work in the public arena for policies to improve the conditions of their daily lives. Whitebook and Ginsburg (1984) and Jensen and Hannibal (2000) have identified advocacy strategies and developed a curriculum framework to help prepare early childhood practitioners to advocate for children and families. Whitebook and Ginsburg (1984) discuss the importance of advocacy training, as well as the need for early childhood professionals to begin learning how to be advocates early in their professional preparation programs. Although they provide a framework for advocacy training, neither Jensen and Hannibal nor Whitebook and Ginsburg provide data regarding the use of the curriculum materials in preparation programs or the effectiveness of the training materials.

Statement of the Problem

The early childhood profession regards advocacy as a professional and ethical responsibility yet little is known about what traditional early childhood preparation

programs are doing to prepare preprofessionals to advocate for children, families and the profession. This study surveyed selected early childhood teacher educators who currently prepare undergraduate preservice professionals in two-year and four-year institutions throughout the United States to identify and evaluate the existing advocacy training practices in preservice education. The study further analyzed the beliefs of practicing professionals regarding the importance of advocacy and contrasted them with the beliefs of selected leaders in the field of early childhood education to evaluate the need for advocacy instruction in undergraduate programs.

Leaders in the field of early childhood have identified a need for the preparation programs of early childhood professionals to include advocacy training (Almy, 1985; Lombardi, 1986; NAEYC, 1989). Kagan (1989) calls for “robust advocacy efforts” to ensure the advancement of a “children’s agenda” and suggests that all early childhood professionals must begin to view advocacy as a necessity.

> Specifically, incoming professionals must be socialized to roles not only as future educators and caregivers, but as future advocates. To legitimate advocacy, practitioners need to understand the importance of the advocacy process and their critical role in it. Given their understanding of children and families, they are particularly well situated to be effective advocates. (Kagan, 1989, p.28)

Several books written about advocacy (Jensen & Chevalier, 1990; Jensen & Hannibal, 2000; Fennimore, 1989; Goffin & Lombardi, 1988) address issues affecting children and families as well as advocacy activities and strategies. In *Speaking Out: Early Childhood Advocacy* (1988), Goffin and Lombardi focus on "the whys and hows of

advocacy, providing strategies to help you select issues, build support, and join with others"(p. v). Jensen and Hannibal (2000) state that the text is "designed to involve readers in reflection on current issues in early childhood and in assuming an advocacy role"(p. ix). Fennimore (1989) declares that "my purpose in writing this book is to support the growth of a basic commitment to child advocacy in early childhood educators" (p. xiv). Whitebook and Ginsburg (1984) and Cahill (1986) provide guidelines for advocacy training. Yet the literature reveals little about how, or if, early childhood professionals are prepared to advocate on behalf of children and families. Consequently, there is a need for early childhood professionals to have information regarding the extent to which advocacy is or is not included in preprofessional training and to have data regarding the course content necessary for advocacy preparation. This information will enable teacher educators to prepare early childhood professionals for advocacy roles.

Purpose

Preparation programs for early childhood professionals encompass a wide array of course requirements and knowledge components. NAEYC has identified guidelines for the preparation of all professionals that include the core knowledge for the profession and has a code of ethical conduct that includes a responsibility for all professionals to become advocates for children. Although agencies, groups and individuals exhort early childhood education professionals to advocate for children, little is known about what traditional early childhood preparation programs are doing to prepare preprofessionals to advocate for children, families and the profession. The literature reveals no clearly articulated plan for preparing early childhood professionals for the advocacy role. The purposes of this

study are to: (a) describe the current practices in two-year and four-year early childhood teacher preparation programs used to prepare professionals to advocate for children and families, (b) determine if there is a difference in the advocacy preparation of two-year and four-year institutions, (c) determine what leaders in the field of early care and education believe constitutes appropriate advocacy training for early childhood professionals, (d) describe the advocacy activities of teacher educators, and (e) suggest a model for including advocacy in preservice teacher preparation.

This study assessed the current advocacy practices of early childhood teacher educators by answering the following research questions:

1. To what extent do teacher educators include advocacy training in the preparation of preservice teacher educators?
2. What are the advocacy strategies currently included in the preparation programs of preservice early childhood professionals?
3. What are the reasons for including or not including advocacy training in preservice courses?
4. What do preservice teacher educators see as priorities in the advocacy training of early childhood professionals?
5. According to the leaders in the field of early childhood education, what are the priorities for advocacy training of preservice teachers?
6. In what advocacy activities do early childhood teacher educators participate?
7. Are there differences in the advocacy training of preservice teacher educators according to selected demographic categories?

8. What advocacy activities suggest a model advocacy program for preservice teacher educators?

Significance of the Study

The beliefs of early childhood teacher educators about advocacy not only influences their teaching activities but also the attitudes and beliefs of future educators. Those educators who have participated in the survey will benefit from a reflective look at themselves and their beliefs about children and advocacy. The survey will serve the profession by describing our success towards the goal of preparing early childhood professionals who are advocates for children and families. The study will assist early childhood educators in the identification of content that will prepare preservice teachers who are capable of meeting the challenges of the future as they work with diverse groups of children.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were used:

1. Advocate-a person who speaks or takes a stand on behalf of the needs of children and families to bring about changes that will help children grow and fully develop (Beck, 1979).
2. Advocacy-working beyond the professional assignment, in the wider social community, to bring about changes that will result in better education and social conditions for young children and their families (Fennimore, 1989).

3. Advocacy Activities-include but are not limited to the following: sharing beliefs and knowledge about child development with parents, policymakers, and other decision makers; sharing professional experiences that describe how policies affect children and families; volunteering to represent early childhood processionals in a coalition to represent the needs of children; serving on a legislative telephone tree; work with others to develop a position statement on a critical issue relating to children ; volunteer to speak to the school board on developmentally appropriate practices; and other activities to promote the needs of children (Goffin & Lombardi, 1988).
4. Preservice professionals-refers to those persons who are in early childhood preparation programs seeking a two-year or four-year degree. Preservice professionals have not yet entered the profession.
5. Early Childhood professional-refers to anyone who works in the field of early care and education including care providers, directors, teachers and teacher educators.

Limitations

As with any survey, this study had the following limitations. The first deals with the problems associated with recruiting early childhood teacher educators for participation in mail surveys. The choice of recruitment methods used in this study may result in respondents who do not fit the criteria for selection and may therefore not respond to the survey. Although respondents are instructed to simply mail back the form,

there will be no way of knowing how many fail to respond because they did not fit the criteria and simply threw away the questionnaire.

Another limitation of the study deals with the assumption that respondents will answer the questions truthfully. This limitation applies both to the questionnaire and the interview. Although the questionnaire and the interview are confidential, they are not anonymous. This limitation may result in responses to questions that are perceived to be socially acceptable and not necessarily reflective of the beliefs of the respondent.

The final limitation is that the universities will be those represented by the members of NAECTE and ACCESS and thus not necessarily representative of all teacher preparation institutions across the nation.

Delimitations

For the study of current advocacy practices of early childhood teacher educators, respondents were delimited to the current members of the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE) and the American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators (ACCESS) organizations who have taught preservice preparation courses in the last three years. This was not a limitation since the researcher was only interested in the current practice of early childhood teacher educators who prepare preservice teachers. The study is further delimited to leaders in the field of early childhood education represented by the President and Vice President/s of NAEYC, the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI), the Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) and the NAEYC state affiliates of California, Michigan, New York,

and Texas. This is not a limitation since the researcher was only interested in the opinions of leaders of the largest early childhood professional organizations.

Summary

At a time when the attention of the nation is focused on the needs of young children, many children continue to need advocates to work on their behalf. Teachers of young children are uniquely qualified to understand the needs of the children and families of today and to work for changes that will support the healthy growth and development of all children. This study attempts to gain a better understanding of current advocacy activities in early childhood preprofessional preparation programs. For more than a decade, early childhood leaders have talked about the importance of advocacy training in preprofessional programs. The new millennium is a time for a review of the standards and requirements of the profession to determine what the profession is actually doing to prepare early childhood professionals to advocate for children and families.

The study is presented in five major chapters. Chapter 1 includes an introduction that provides an overview of the need for this research endeavor, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, pertinent research questions, limitations and delimitations of the research and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 presents a literature review to provide background for the study. Chapter 3 includes the design and methodology of the study. The findings are discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 contains the implications, summary, conclusions, future directions for research, and a model for advocacy.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ellen Key declared the twentieth century "'The Century of the Child'" (Osborn, 1991, p. 96). As the century began, children worked long hours in factories and performed hard labor just as the adults in the work place. Society viewed the practice of child labor as not only morally valuable but economically prudent. After many unsuccessful attempts by child advocates to enact child labor laws, in 1938 the Fair Labor Standards Act upheld the constitutionality of the child labor laws (Osborn, 1991). It seemed as if children were finally going to be allowed to be children. Today as we begin the twenty-first century, many American children live in dangerous and violent communities and grow up in very difficult situations. Recognizing that child advocacy will be an important role for all adults and especially teachers of young children, the purpose of this literature review is to investigate the role of advocacy as it relates to the early childhood teaching profession. The literature review is divided into four sections. The first section provides an account of the historical foundations of advocacy. A description of the types of advocacy is included in the second section. The third section addresses the professional standard for advocacy in early childhood education. The final section includes research findings on professional advocacy training practices.

Historical Foundations of Advocacy

Goffin and Lombardi (1988) defined early childhood advocacy as standing up for children and their needs. According to Beck (1979), “Advocacy is a process that one goes through to bring about changes that will help children grow and develop" (p. 12). "Child advocacy is intervention on behalf of children in relation to those services and systems that are injurious to children, that are inadequate to prevent harm, or that provide inappropriate help to children" (Kahn, Kamerman & McGowan, 1973, p. 37). Advocacy is not a new term. Advocates have always organized groups of people to speak for ideas, issues, and or causes in order to influence political decisions (Payzant, 1992).

Ross (1983) described the child labor movement as the first national child advocacy movement in the United States. According to Ross, early advocacy followed two patterns: single-issue campaigns and intellectual crusades to transform public attitudes. Both approaches to advocacy placed the child at the center of social reform movements.

The child labor campaign began in the 1880s and the focus of the reform movement was a carefully selected and well-defined single-issue campaign. All of the rhetoric and the political and philanthropic endeavors were focused on the struggle to end child labor. In 1904, the National Child Labor Committee became the first national advocacy group for children. This group declared child labor a major social ill and worked to pass a bill in every state to regulate or abolish child labor. The advocacy methods used in the child labor campaign are the same strategies that are utilized by child

advocates today to focus on a reform issue: publicity, investigation, and lobbying (Ross, 1983).

In 1907, Felix Adler founded the Ethical Culture movement. The focus of the movement, a symbolic campaign, is an example of the second strategy of early child advocacy. Adler made a clear connection between a climate for healthy child development and a social order for adults that recognized the human potential and social justice. The child labor reform movement did not reach the set goal until 1938 when a federal law passed regulating child labor. Both types of child advocacy must be used together to have coherence and wide appeal in seeking reforms.

In 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt, persuaded by a number of concerned advocates, held the first White House Conference on problems related to child care and development. Congress created the Children's Bureau in 1912 as a result of the conference. The creation of the Children's Bureau marked the first time the Federal government recognized its responsibility to promote the health and welfare of the children of the entire nation (Cahill, 1986; Knitzer, 1971; Osborn, 1991). As a result of lobbying by the Children's Bureau, children were included in the Social Security Act of 1935 (McDonald, 1995). During this period of history, advocates worked to expand the government services available to children. The changing role of the government created a national industry of child-serving programs. Many programs that were supported by private charities became publicly funded (Litzelfelner & Petr, 1997).

The 1960s and 1970s brought an increase in government assistance for children and families. The 1965 Head Start Project was established by the Office of Economic

Opportunity to provide a comprehensive health, nutrition and education experience for young children in poverty. The program was designed to give children a "head start" into life and ultimately reverse the poverty cycle (Osborn, 1991). Intervention programs such as Head Start, the Comprehensive Child Development Act, and programs to stop child abuse, have all received national attention and support but none of these issues have successfully united child advocates like the child reform movement early in the century (Ross, 1983).

A series of legislation enacted in the 1970s resulted in new rights and protections for young children. In 1972, Project Head Start was required to reserve ten percent of its enrollment for children with handicaps. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act was passed by Congress in 1974 to provide assistance for the estimated 300,000 children in abusive situations. This law established the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. The 1975 enactment of Public Law (PL) 94-142 was a landmark piece of legislation for children with special needs. The law provided a free and appropriate public school education for nearly eight million children with disabling conditions. Public Law 95-49, enacted in 1977, provided billions of dollars for the establishment of programs for handicapped persons. The funds were provided to serve approximately eight million children including deaf, blind, mentally retarded, speech-impaired, emotionally disturbed, and other health impaired children who were given access to a public education through PL 94-142 in 1975 (Osborn, 1991). By 1986, child advocates were successful in securing Public Law 99-457 that extended a free and appropriate education to all preschoolers, age 3 to 5, who had special needs. Provisions in this law also created the Handicapped Infants

and Toddlers Program providing intervention for at-risk or special needs children from birth to 3 years of age. Although states are not required to offer such programs, many states offer services to families with infants and toddlers that have special needs (Osborn, 1991).

The Head Start campaign and the reform movement that resulted in the Education for All handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142), are unique child advocacy issues because parents mobilized and, worked with reformers, professionals, and other child advocates, for their children (Kagan, 1991, p.52). Cooperative efforts between volunteers and public agencies have historically been the most successful in securing legislation. Private lobbyists for children, such as the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), provide a more focused forum for monitoring and influencing public policy much like the National Child Labor Committee of 1904. CDF relies on the historically sound practices of gathering data, lobbying and using publicity to work for children (Ross, 1983). Collaboration and coordination of the goals and resources of all the stakeholders involved in the reform effort results in a more united effort to secure the necessary policy changes for reform (Kagan, 1991).

Education reform movements and restructuring efforts focused on improved student achievement and school change have dominated the schools since the sixties. The 1980s and 1990s have seen a focused effort on school reform by many advocates. A Nation At Risk, published in 1983, prompted numerous top-down mandates and restructuring efforts for school improvement. Goodlad (1990) and others (Carnegie Forum, 1986; Curry and Wergin, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Fullan, 1993) have

found that education must change to meet the demands of our society although they do not agree on the direction these changes should take. Goals 2000: Educate America became public policy in 1993 and, with the adoption of this national policy, the nation began searching to identify the changes necessary to prepare America's children to compete in the competitive global society of the twenty-first century. Education reform advocates report that to improve the education of today's children we must improve the teachers who teach in the schools (Curry and Wergin, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Fullan, 1993). In 1994, a goal focused on teacher education and the professional development of teachers, was added to the original six National Education Goals: "By the year 2000, the nation's teaching force will have access to programs for continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century" (Dilworth & Imig, 1995). The key to educational improvement is to prepare teachers who can meet the challenges of change and provide quality instruction for all children (Fullan, 1993).

Takanishi (1978) in an historical review of the contemporary child advocacy movements reported that "the emergence of childhood as a social issue is barely a century old. The historical roots of ...child advocacy movements can be found in an earlier period (1873-1914) characterized as the child saving era" (Takanishi, 1978, p.8). Takanishi points out that people in the child-helping professions of child clinical psychology, child psychiatry, social work, developmental psychology, and early childhood education owe the existence of their roles to the political activists of the late nineteenth and early

twentieth centuries. The early advocates carried out scientific investigations gathering large amounts of data as a basis for lobbying and legislation. Once legislation was funded, the advocates actually brought the programs to life. Throughout the entire advocacy process, these early advocates "grasped what we have lost - an understanding of the power of political action for the promotion of children's rights "(Takanishi, 1978, p. 21).

Types of Advocacy

The history of the child advocacy movement identifies many public policies that have been enacted because of the efforts of child advocates working for change. Although public policy advocacy is the most reported area of advocacy for children, there are several types of advocacy described in the journals of developmental psychology, social work, and the literature on early childhood education. Melton (1983) differentiates between class advocacy and case advocacy. Case advocacy is advocacy on behalf of one child. The advocate attempts to secure services for a particular child from a school or other system. Class advocacy is defined by Melton as advocacy efforts on behalf of a group of children with similar needs or problems. The case/class advocacy distinction is derived from law for purposes of litigation (Melton, 1983). Class advocacy and class action litigation are effective ways to change a system on behalf of a group of children. The federal legislation for children with disabling conditions was a direct result of the class advocacy efforts of a group of advocates concerned about the needs of all children with disabling conditions. Fennimore (1989) reports that class advocacy is possible on the federal, state, city, local, or institutional level, and frequently is used to change

existing policies or create new policies. Case and class advocacy are both important for early childhood educators who are child advocates (Fennimore, 1989). According to Goffin and Lombardi (1988) there are three areas of advocacy that early childhood educators can become involved in: public policy advocacy, private-sector advocacy, and personal advocacy.

Public Policy Advocacy

Public policy advocates work to reform public systems that impact children and families by trying to change policies, laws, and budgetary restraints to address the needs of children. Public policy advocacy is often viewed by early childhood professionals as intimidating and difficult to accomplish (Lindamood, 1995). Public policy advocacy can occur at any of the three levels of government: local, state and/or federal. There are four types of public policy advocacy: case advocacy, administrative advocacy, legislative advocacy and class advocacy (Goffin & Lombardi, 1988).

Case advocacy involves a single child. In social work case advocacy is described as helping others get needed services, resources, or entitlements from a public agency or system (Knitzer, 1971). In the field of child welfare, case advocacy includes working on behalf of a child who has been abused or neglected to secure appropriate protection and placement (Litzelfelner & Petr 1997). An early childhood educator who works to secure glasses for a child whose parents can not afford to buy glasses is an example of the type of case advocacy frequently engaged in by early childhood professionals. Case advocacy is very important for the child that is the recipient of the advocacy effort but usually has

little impact on changing polices or services that impact the larger society (Richart, 1997).

Administrative advocacy is directed toward the governmental agencies and staff that are responsible for the guidelines, regulations, and program implementation standards of legislation. To engage in administrative advocacy, the advocate must have knowledge of how the agency operates and access to people who have the power to resolve the issue of concern (Goffin & Lombardi, 1988). According to Melton (1983), administrative agencies decide the eligibility of individual children for educational programs, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), subsidized day care, Medicaid, and many other programs that support children and families.

Legislative advocacy focuses on the advocate's efforts to assure that laws protect and serve the best interests of children. Legislative advocates identify needed legislation and work to secure passage of the legislation. Advocates also evaluate existing legislation or proposed legislation and work to support or create opposition to legislative changes (Goffin & Lombardi, 1988). The best known children's lobby at the national level is the Children's Defense Fund. CDF is known for national lobbying efforts on behalf children's issues especially those issues that affect children and families who live in poverty. The National Education Association and other professional associations are also representative of national legislative advocacy groups (Melton, 1983).

Class advocacy focuses on the needs of a group of children with similar needs or problems. Class advocacy often involves the courts as change agents on behalf of the child (Melton, 1983). Federal legislation was passed to protect victims of child abuse

because of class advocacy. In education, lobbying for the Head Start program is an example of class advocacy for a specific group of children (Fennimore, 1989). Goffin and Lombardi (1988) report that litigation is used by child advocates when they think children's constitutional rights have been denied.

Public policy advocacy involves a variety of areas of advocacy for the early childhood professional. Each advocacy area requires knowledge, skills, and a commitment to children and families (Goffin and Lombardi, 1988). Almy (1985) and Caldwell (1987) identified a need for more advocacy training for all early childhood professionals to help them develop skill in forming coalitions with parents, legislators, and other groups in order to advance issues that impact children, families, and the profession (Ott, Zeichner, & Price, 1990).

Private-Sector Advocacy

Private-sector advocacy focuses on the policies and practices of private businesses and institutions. In the private sector, policies are made that affect children's growth and development just as in the public sector (Goffin & Lombardi, 1988). Private-sector advocacy focuses on changing the policies and practices of private businesses, organizations and institutions. Decisions made in the private sector involve collective decision making and are political just as decisions made in the public policy advocacy arena. Private businesses and corporations establish parental leave policies that affect a parent's ability to care for their children. Some corporations have child care facilities on their premises and must have accurate data to make quality decisions about the programs that they develop for children and families. Schools that are operated by churches have to

make curriculum selection decisions. All of these decisions are influenced by advocates who are working in the private-sector arena to influence policies that affect children and families. Private-sector advocacy parallels public policy advocacy and its strategies although the results will only change or modify the policies of the targeted organizations (Goffin & Lombardi, 1988). The early childhood professional uses the knowledge and skills of public policy advocacy to influence private-sector policies.

Personal Advocacy

The third type of advocacy identified by Goffin and Lombardi (1988) is personal advocacy. Goffin (1988) referred to personal advocacy as the fourth level of advocacy-local, state, federal, and personal. The early childhood professional has many opportunities for personal advocacy; to inform others about issues that affect young children, families, and our professions. Personal advocacy efforts include speaking to groups about appropriate practice, working within the school to identify appropriate assessment tools for young children, and helping a local church committee design a playground for children in the community. Personal advocacy also involves developing supportive relationships with the parents, families, and colleagues with whom we work. "Personal advocacy can become the first step in advocating for all young children" (Goffin, 1988, p.53).

In *Speaking Out: Early Childhood Advocacy* (1988), the authors described all three types of advocacy as different from our direct service to children and families.

> In our public policy, private-sector, and personal advocacy efforts, we go beyond the educational responsibilities of our jobs: we reach beyond teaching and caring

> for children and their parents. As early childhood advocates, we speak up, reach out, and try to change the circumstances of children's lives. Advocacy is a necessary component of an expanded vision of the early childhood educator's role. (1988, p. 8)

Professional Standard for Advocacy

The early childhood profession has established a core of knowledge for all professionals, a code of ethical standards, and a commitment to serve young children and families. The National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Statement of Commitment (Feeney & Kipnis, 1998) for early childhood professionals proclaims that early childhood professionals will serve as advocates for young children and their families.

Child Development and Advocacy

A part of the core knowledge of the early childhood profession is knowledge of child development theories that affect the child. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory of human development describes an environment that influences the growing child and is influenced by the growing child. Bronfenbrenner described the environment as four structural levels each having an impact on the child and the family. The innermost level of the environment, the microsystem, includes the growing child and the immediate environment of the child. The outermost level, the macrosystem, includes customs, laws and values of the child's environment. Social policies are a part of the ecological environment that influences children's healthy growth and development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Goffin, 1988). If our federal, state and local policies do not provide for the needs of

the developing child, then healthy growth and development will be adversely affected. "Through its policies (or lack thereof), government-local, state, and federal-helps to determine the social, economic, and political circumstances that define the range of choices that parents and others can make for young children" (Goffin, 1988, p. 52). Years of study by researchers interested in the well-being of children and families in America revealed the interrelatedness of the systems making up the matrix of child development: family, school, health, and child care (Belsky, 1981; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Zigler & Berman 1983; Zigler & Gilman, 1990; Zigler & Gilman, 1994; Zigler & Trickett, 1978). The ecological orientation provides a systems perspective for addressing the problems of children and families and provides a rationale for collaboration among the many agencies that serve children and families (Kagan, 1992). In *Who Cares for Children?,* Bronfenbrenner (1994) states that effective child-rearing processes require public policies and practices that begin with the child in the family and other care settings and extend to the more distant contexts of the workplace, community, and the society at large. Bronfenbrenner identifies the fist step to action as "the education of the public about what research and experience has taught us about the forces that threaten the well-being of children and families worldwide" (p. 127). The ecological theory of human development supports the need for those early childhood professionals who are knowledgeable about the environments of young children to advocate on their behalf.

The Field becomes More Policy Conscious

Sponseller and Fink (1980) studied the attitudes of early childhood professionals regarding early childhood education out of the home and the policies these professionals

supported for expanding early childhood education. The purpose of the study was to determine how beliefs affected advocacy efforts. The study identified various beliefs related to the education of young children and found many social policy matters that affect the lives of children and are therefore potential concerns for child advocates. The researchers concluded that clarification and reconciliation of varying viewpoints among the early childhood educators is essential to reach the unified position necessary to impact policy decisions related to young children. Educators must clarify and reconcile their views to reach a consensus on policies to pursue or the decisions about early childhood education may be made by less knowledgeable organized activists. The implications for all educators is that we must determine a common vision or goal and then work together for the common goals to be more successful in advocating for children.

Dimidjian (1989) urged early childhood professionals to become change agents and activists for young children. Early childhood change agents must work to bring community concern and commitment for the children who are in poverty, hungry, or who are in need of social or medical services. In *Early Childhood at Risk: Actions and Advocacy for Young Children*, Dimidjian describes the need for educators to support the NAEYC standards for developmentally appropriate practice and to work to get local child care programs accredited through the Center Accreditation Project of NAEYC. Dimidjian declares that all early childhood professionals need to work to make changes in the structure of the elementary schools.

Kagan (1989) reported that as the early childhood field has become more policy conscious, advocacy interest has grown. The widespread public interest in early care and education issues, and the significant number of policies relevant to children and families that have been passed at both the federal and state levels in recent years, has prompted early childhood professionals to become more interested in advocacy. Early childhood professionals have traditionally reacted to solutions suggested by those within the political structure rather than taking a proactive advocacy role on public policy issues (Lombardi, 1986; Stegelin, 1992;). Early childhood professionals are encouraged to become more actively involved in the policy making process. Kilmer (1980) stated that, "rather than being disdainful about the decision making process, (early childhood specialists) need to appreciate the skills of politicos and to work in tandem with them to understand how to affect the system" (p. 250).

Among the problems associated with advocacy efforts for young children is the need to identify advocates in order to develop appropriate roles and a coordinated effort on behalf of the children. Another problem with advocacy is that when coalitions are formed, often the personal priorities, ideas, beliefs and agendas interfere with the good of the coalition. The early childhood and child care issues are an example of how one's own viewpoint can hinder representation. The third problem in advocacy is that although advocacy is important, it is secondary to teaching. Professional advocates believe that another reason for the reluctance to become advocates is that practitioners are frightened of the unknown (Kagan, 1989).

Early childhood professionals have the responsibility to work for changes in our society in order to make a difference in the lives of children. Fullan (1993), described a moral change agent as one who assumes the responsibility of making a difference in the lives of children, not for recognition or gain, but out of a moral sense of commitment to the children. Kagan (1989) identified four main reasons for advocacy in the early care and education field: (1) to preserve programs to ensure places for children who need child care; (2) to increase service capacity, to enhance program quality, or to demonstrate that a new idea or program type can work, as in funding the demonstration programs; (3) to change the infrastructure of the field making child care and early education more accessible; and (4) to generate public awareness of the issues facing the field and facing children and parents. Advocates must be well prepared and ready to take a stand for the children.

The move to empower teachers to make decisions and make teaching a profession creates new opportunities for teachers to make decisions that can improve conditions for children in the classroom and in society. True professionals have a social obligation to serve in the community but advocacy for children is often not viewed as a priority or a responsibility of the working professional. Clearly if teaching is to become a recognized profession teachers must learn to be child advocates.

Professional Training

One strategy that has been suggested to increase the early childhood professional's participation in advocacy is to include training in public policy and advocacy in teacher education programs (Almy, 1985; Caldwell, 1987; Kilmer, 1980; Lombardi, 1986;

NAEYC, 1995a). Preservice early childhood professionals should be taught concrete, proactive advocacy strategies (Kagan, 1989). In a national survey of advocacy and policy in early childhood teacher education programs, Stegelin (1999) concluded that few programs offer courses focused entirely on advocacy and policy content at the undergraduate level. The purpose of the survey was to determine to what extent undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs in the United States include course content that specifically addresses policy and advocacy. The sample population included all undergraduate early childhood education (ECE) programs in public and private institutions of higher education in the United States. The study revealed the following:

1. Few programs offer courses that are entirely focused on advocacy and policy content at the undergraduate level;
2. Early childhood teacher education programs in the U.S are under pressure to become more subject matter oriented and this pressure is contributing to the diminishing time and emphasis on advocacy and policy;
3. Limited resources contribute to the lack of policy and advocacy content;
4. Both state and national early childhood advocacy organizations need to provide more consistent support to teacher education programs; and
5. Exchange programs between institutions of higher education and child and family advocacy organizations and agencies would greatly benefit faculty.

The need for advocacy and policy awareness and knowledge has never been greater and therefore advocacy and policy must be integrated more consistently into undergraduate

early childhood teacher education. Stegelin concluded that future research must examine the course content of existing programs in order to determine how the advocacy and policy content needs are being met in undergraduate programs.

Cahill (1986) found an absence of a structured approach to advocacy training in a review of child advocacy training efforts. In *Training Volunteers as Child Advocates,* Cahill identified three components of a training curriculum for advocacy; conceptual framework for child advocacy, methodology for reviewing complex public policy issues, and advocacy training and practices. Cahill argued that only when the conceptual framework and the methodology for reviewing public policy is understood should advocacy training and practices be taught. "The intent of a planned approach is to ensure that the personal commitment and concern of volunteers are enhanced by a solid foundation of knowledge and understanding" (Cahill, 1986, p. 546).

In a survey of early childhood preservice students, Jensen (1986) found that early childhood preservice students were reluctant to become involved in advocacy activities because they felt that: their efforts would have no impact on the system; advocacy is time-consuming; they lacked the knowledge about the political process necessary for successful advocacy, and lacked the ability to communicate effectively about the needs of young children. These findings are consistent with those of Lombardi (1986) in a survey of a group of graduate students and Brunson (1997) in a survey of student teachers and early childhood professionals working in classrooms serving infants through fourth grade. Lombardi found that many students felt that their actions would not matter.

Students reported a fear of the political process and a general lack of knowledge about the process of advocacy.

A review of the literature on advocacy training revealed essential components necessary for inclusion in programs that prepare preservice early childhood professionals to advocate for children and families. The essential components were used in a questionnaire to identify the current practices of early childhood educators in their preparation of preservice professionals. The essential components include:

- Content knowledge for advocacy that includes: history of early childhood public policy (Lombardi, 1986), knowledge of current issues in early childhood (Jensen, 1986), knowledge of the political system and process including how policy is made (Jensen, 1986; Zigler & Finn, 1981), understanding of the change process (Lombardi, 1986; Whitebook & Ginsburg, 1984).
- Advocacy strategies for influencing others to support early childhood initiatives include: organizing, involving others, using media, and assessing the political climate (Goffin & Lombardi, 1988).
- Interpersonal skills necessary for successful advocacy include: flexibility, compromise, cooperative problem solving, and reflective listening (Goffin & Lombardi, 1988).

The literature also suggested particular teaching strategies that support the development of advocacy roles. The strategies were used to identify the teaching strategies currently used by teacher educators to teach advocacy. The strategies are

grouped into the following categories (Jenson & Chevalier, 1990; Jenson & Hannibal, 2000):

- Issue debates
- Issue interviews and advocacy speakers
- Role-play simulation activities
- Advocacy journals, media materials, advocacy letters, position papers
- Professional organizations, lobbying coalitions and task forces (Allen, 1983; Deloria & Brookins, 1982; Jensen, 1986; Jensen, 1986; Kilmer, 1980; Sponseller & Fink, 1980; Whitebook & Ginsburg, 1984; Zigler & Finn, 1981).

Almy (1985) described the field of early childhood education as "seriously deficient in meeting the needs of children, parents, and staff" (p. 10). Lindamood (1995) asserts that advocacy by teachers is one way for the field to progress in addressing these issues. Lindamood (1995) developed an advocacy involvement continuum to “...illustrate the multiple levels of involvement available to any advocate. The continuum includes the roles of ‘dreamer’, donator, volunteer, initiator, and fighter. Each role along the continuum consists of increasing amounts of personal involvement and risk” (p. 23). Milbrath (1965) developed a hierarchy of political involvement that includes three levels: spectator, transitional activities and gladiatorial activities. According to Milbrath, "political participation is often spoken of as being cumulative; persons who engage in one political action often engage in others as well" (p. 17). Milbrath maintained that the hierarchy also constitutes a hierarchy of costs. Time and energy costs are least for the activities at the bottom of the hierarchy, conversely behaviors at higher levels of the

hierarchy require a greater expenditure of energy and most likely require greater personal commitment. The hierarchy represents a logical progression of becoming involved in political activity. Milbrath (1965), in the hierarchy of political involvement, and Lindamood (1995), in a continuum of advocacy involvement, described various levels of involvement in advocacy. The various levels of involvement and commitment also suggest developmental stages in becoming an advocate just as there are developmental stages for children and teachers. Katz (1977) identified four stages that teachers progress through as they become mature and confident professionals. An advocacy continuum, based on the work of Milbrath and Lindamood, was developed for this study to describe the current advocacy activities of early childhood educators as they strive to model advocacy involvement for the early childhood professionals they prepare.

Summary

This review of literature was organized into four sections. The first section summarized the historical foundations of advocacy. The second section provided a description of the various types of advocacy. The third section addressed the professional standard for advocacy in early childhood education. The final section discussed research findings related to advocacy training. The review of literature indicated that while the early childhood profession regards advocacy for children and families as a professional responsibility, little is known about the current practice in teacher education programs to prepare future early childhood professionals for advocacy. This study adds to the research on advocacy training by focusing on the beliefs and current practices of early childhood teacher educators in two-year and four-year institutions.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The early childhood profession regards advocacy as a professional and ethical responsibility yet little is known about what traditional early childhood preparation programs are doing to prepare preprofessionals to advocate for children, families and the profession. One strategy suggested to increase the early childhood professional's participation in advocacy is to include advocacy training in teacher education programs. The purpose of this study was to describe the advocacy training practices of selected early childhood teacher educators who currently prepare undergraduate preservice professionals in two-year and four-year institutions throughout the United States. Additionally, the study was designed to: (a) determine what leaders in the field of early care and education believe constitutes appropriate advocacy training for early childhood preprofessionals, (b) describe the advocacy activities of teacher educators, (c) determine if there is a difference in the advocacy preparation of two-year and four-year institutions, and (d) recommend a model for including advocacy in preservice teacher preparation programs.

Participants

The population for this study was comprised of the 1,232 members of the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE), 279 members of the American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators (ACCESS), and 14 selected

leaders of the largest early childhood professional organizations. This population was selected because the members are early childhood teacher educators, the organizations are national therefore all parts of the United States are represented, and the organizations advocate for improvements in early childhood teacher education. The selected organizations represent three specific groups of early childhood professionals: teacher educators that prepare preservice early childhood professionals in two-year institutions and four-year institutions and leaders in the field of early childhood education. In this study, two-year preparation institutions are represented by the members of the American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators; four-year teacher preparation institutions are represented by the members of the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators; and leaders in the field are represented by the Presidents and Vice President/s of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI), the Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) and the NAEYC state affiliates of California, Michigan, New York, and Texas.

The participants in this study included the 202 teacher educators who prepare early childhood professionals in two-year institutions and the 405 educators who work in four-year institutions that returned the mailed questionnaire and met the criteria for inclusion in the study. All 14 of the selected leaders of early childhood professional organizations participated in the telephone interviews. The sample size was 607 early childhood teacher educators from a population of 1,511 potential participants (40.2%).

Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was used for this study. Orr (1995) defines *survey* as a "broad, generic term that refers to a collection of data from a large number of respondents through the use of questionnaires, interviews, or some combination of the two" (Orr, 1995, p. 291). This study used a combination design of a mailed questionnaire and telephone interview. The survey provided the researcher with information about the current practices, beliefs, and opinions of the participants. Through quantitative analysis, the researcher used the data collected in the survey to investigate trends and characteristics that are present within the population studied (Pribyl, 1994). According to Fink and Kosecoff (1998), there are three reasons for conducting a survey: to plan a program or set policy, to evaluate the effectiveness of a program or to collect information for research. This survey was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent do teacher educators include advocacy training in the preparation of preservice teacher educators?
2. What are the advocacy strategies currently included in the preparation programs of preservice early childhood professionals?
3. What are the reasons for including or not including advocacy training in preservice courses?
4. What do preservice teacher educators see as priorities in the advocacy training of early childhood professionals?
5. According to the leaders in the field of early childhood education, what are the priorities for advocacy training of preservice teachers?

6. In what advocacy activities do early childhood teacher educators participate?
7. Are there differences in the advocacy training of preservice teacher educators according to selected demographic categories?
8. What advocacy activities suggest a model advocacy program for preservice teacher educators?

Instrumentation

Two instruments were developed to collect data for this study. A self-administered questionnaire, A Matter of Opinion: Evaluating PreProfessional Advocacy Training Practices (Appendix A), was mailed to potential participants from the NAECTE and ACCESS organizations. An interview protocol, Evaluating PreProfessional Advocacy Training Practices: Telephone Interview Protocol (Appendix B) was used in telephone interviews with the officers of NAEYC, ACEI, SECA and the officers of the four NAEYC state affiliate groups.

Questionnaire. A seven-part questionnaire was developed to measure current teacher educator advocacy instructional practices and beliefs about the importance of advocacy in early childhood preparation programs. Part 1 of the questionnaire consisted of four items asking for information to determine the eligibility of the participant for the study, to identify the type of institution, the location of participant, and the course responsibilities of the participant. Part 2 of the questionnaire consisted of 20 Likert Scale items and one select-the-best answer item. The Likert Scale questions were designed to determine the frequency of inclusion of advocacy skills and strategies in courses taught by the participants. Items were rated on the following scale: 1 *Frequently,* 2 *Sometimes,* 3

Rarely, and 4 *Never.* The second question was designed to identify the number of class hours spent on advocacy content. Part 3 of the questionnaire included two questions designed to determine the reason participants include advocacy instruction in their courses or do not include advocacy in their courses. Participants ranked the forced choice items from most important to least important. Part 4 of the questionnaire consisted of 27 Likert Scale items designed to determine the importance participants attached to selected advocacy skills and strategies. Items were rated on the following scale: 1 *Very Important*, 2 *Somewhat Important*, 3 *Not too Important*, 4 *Not at all important.* Part 5 utilized 15 yes or no response items to determine the advocacy activities participants actively engaged in over the previous year and an open-ended question regarding meaningful advocacy participation. Part 6 of the questionnaire consisted of seven items asking for personal and institutional background information. The final part of the questionnaire, Part 7, utilized an open-ended format to allow participants to make additional comments regarding advocacy in preprofessional preparation programs.

Items used in the questionnaire were adapted from three surveys previously used to measure teacher educator perceptions and beliefs and essential components of advocacy training found in the literature. The following surveys were resources in the development of the questionnaire and protocol in this study: (a) The Survey of Instruction in Professional Ethics, was developed by Freeman (1996) to determine how much emphasis the study of ethics receives in preservice teacher preparation programs; (b) a survey developed by Stegelin (1999) to identify the extent that early childhood and child development departments are incorporating course content and practicum experiences

related to policy and advocacy in their courses; and (c) a previous questionnaire developed by the researcher (Brunson, 1997) to identify the beliefs of practicing teachers in early childhood classrooms regarding advocacy. The essential components found in the literature were used in the questionnaire to identify the current practices of early childhood educators in their preparation of preservice professionals. The essential components are:

- Content knowledge: history of early childhood public policy (Lombardi, 1986), knowledge of current issues in early childhood (Jensen, 1986), knowledge of the political system and process including how policy is made (Jensen, 1986; Zigler & Finn, 1981), understanding of the change process (Lombardi, 1986; Whitebook & Ginsburg, 1984).
- Advocacy strategies for influencing others to support early childhood initiatives: organizing, involving others, using media, and assessing the political climate (Goffin & Lombardi, 1988).
- Interpersonal skills necessary for successful advocacy include: flexibility, compromise, cooperative problem solving, and reflective listening (Goffin & Lombardi, 1988).

Teaching strategies that support the development of advocacy roles have been identified and grouped into the following categories (Jensen & Chevalier, 1986; Jensen & Hannibal, 2000):

- Issue debates
- Issue interviews and advocacy speakers

- Role-play simulation activities
- Advocacy journals, media materials, advocacy letters, position papers and public information displays
- Professional organizations, lobbying coalitions and task forces (Allen, 1983; Deloria & Brookins, 1982; Jensen, 1986; Kilmer, 1980; Sponseller & Fink, 1977; Whitebook & Ginsburg, 1984; Zigler & Finn, 1981).

Demographic information was collected to assist the researcher in understanding the phenomenon being studied. The data was disaggregated to describe the advocacy practices across the United States and to identify any differences in programs. Demographic information included: the size of the institution of the participant, geographic location of institution, professional affiliation, years of operation of the program, two-year or four-year program status and personal information about the participant.

Telephone Interviews. Leaders in the field of early childhood were interviewed by telephone to determine their beliefs about the current need for advocacy instruction in early childhood professional preparation programs. In this study, leaders in the field of early childhood are identified as the President and Vice President/s of NAEYC, Association for Childhood Education International, the Southern Early Childhood Association, and the NAEYC state affiliates of California, Michigan, New York, and Texas. The researcher interviewed each leader in a telephone interview. In a key informant interview, information is collected from individuals who have more knowledge about a particular topic or who have a different perspective than other members of a

specific population (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). The leaders were selected as key informants because as leaders they have a broad perspective of the field of early childhood and a unique understanding of the needs of the field. The purpose of the telephone interview was to compare selected responses of leaders and teacher educators and to explore the beliefs of leaders regarding the need for advocacy training. Likert Scale questions developed for the mailed questionnaire regarding the importance of various advocacy issues and strategies were also included in the telephone interview protocol. Fink and Kosecoff (1998) list the ability to explore answers with respondents as one of the advantages of the telephone interview. Standardized, open-ended responses were included in the telephone interview protocol to enable the researcher to present the same set of questions to each participant and to allow participants to express their opinions openly without the limitations of closed-response questions.

Validity

One type of survey validity is content validity. Content validity refers to the extent that items or questions "accurately represent the characteristics or attitudes that they are intended to measure" (Fink & Kosecoff, 1998, p. 35). Content validity is established by referring to the literature related to the subject of the questionnaire and asking experts if the items are representative samples of the items needed for the survey (Fink & Kosecoff, 1998). To establish the content validity of this survey, questions were cross-referenced with the elements of advocacy training reported in the literature and previous questionnaires used to survey teacher educators' beliefs and practices regarding other elements of preservice teacher preparation. A group of five early childhood teacher

educators also commented on the content included in the two questionnaires and revisions were made to the questionnaire. In addition, four specialists in advocacy training were asked to review the instrument and make suggestions regarding additions or deletions needed to enhance the content validity of the two instruments. Based on the comments of the two groups, the questions and format of the questionnaire and the interview protocol were revised.

Reliability

Reliability is defined by Leedy (1997) as "the consistency with which a measuring instrument performs" (1997, p. 35). Leedy states that "to be reliable, each instrument must consistently measure the factors for which it was designed" (1997, p. 35). Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) discuss four different approaches to estimating reliability. For this study, the researcher was interested in establishing test-retest reliability and internal consistency.

The test-retest reliability method compares "the results of two administrations of the same measuring instrument separated by some time interval" (Leedy, 1997, p. 35). To establish test-retest reliability for this study, a group of 10 teacher educators, who did not participate in the study, completed the questionnaire. The instrument was given to the group to complete and administered again after four weeks. The teacher educators were interviewed to determine if there were any confusing or misleading items. After collecting two sets of responses, test-retest reliability was calculated to determine if there was consistency between their answers on the first administration and the second administration of the questionnaire. The overall test-retest calculated correlation

coefficient was .87. To further evaluate the test-retest reliability, items were grouped by research purpose and a correlation coefficient was determined for each group. The results are as follows: skills and strategies taught in courses .99; importance of skills, strategies, and content .98; participation in advocacy activities .97; and the ranking of reasons for including and not including advocacy in courses .63. Several items showed polarization and there was confusion over several items. With those items removed, the correlation coefficient increased to .98. The questionnaire was refined to reflect the outcome of the test-retest procedure.

The second reliability test of interest in this study was internal consistency. Internal reliability is how "...consistent the questions on a survey are in measuring the characteristics, attitudes, or qualities that they are supposed to measure" (Fink & Kosecoff, 1998, p. 34). To establish internal reliability, a pilot study, with a target sample size of 30, was conducted. The questionnaire was distributed at an early childhood conference with 38 questionnaires returned. Eight of the pilot study participants did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the study and three potential participants did not complete the survey resulting in a sample size of 27.

Internal consistency was calculated using Cronbach's alpha. This procedure is a statistical procedure used to describe "...how well different items complement each other in their measurement of the same quality or dimension" (Fink & Kosecoff, 1998, p. 34). The analysis of the pilot study data produced an alpha of .91. To further evaluate the internal consistency, items were again grouped by research purpose and an alpha was calculated for each group. The results are as follows: skills included in courses taught .87;

strategies included in courses taught .91; importance of skills, strategies, and content in courses taught .87; importance of advocacy training components .93; participation in advocacy activities .80; and the ranking of reasons for including and not including advocacy in courses .72. The questionnaire was refined again based on responses in the pilot study and written comments regarding confusion about some questions.

Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected for this study in two phases. In the first phase of data collection, survey packets were mailed to all NAECTE and ACCESS members. The packet included a letter of introduction approved by the Institutional Review Board, the questionnaire printed on buff paper to reduce the chance of being lost in other papers, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for returning the questionnaire. The mailed questionnaire was selected for this study because responses from a large geographic area were desired. One of the disadvantages of a mailed questionnaire is that typically the researcher has a lower rate of response than in face-to-face, self-administered questionnaires (Fink & Kosecoff, 1998). According to Cox (1996), the desired response rate is a return of two thirds of the questionnaires for probable representation. Surveys that are conducted by mail typically have a lower response rate than a face-to-face administration of questionnaires (Baruch, 1999; Dillman, 2000; Kerlinger, 1986). Baruch (1999) found that the average response rate for academic, paper surveys was 55.6%. In *Foundations of Behavioral Research* (1986), Kerlinger reported that in mail surveys it is common to have returns of less than 40 or 50% of the population surveyed. Follow-up procedures help the researcher secure the required response rate (Cox,1996; Dillman,

2000). Previous studies (Freeman, 1996; Stegelin, 1999) involving similar teacher educator populations yielded response rates of 29% and 23% respectively. For the purpose of this study, the desired response was at least a 30% to 40% rate of return.

Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) in a synthesis of the research findings on response rates, found that three follow-ups to the initial mailing significantly increased response rates to mailed questionnaires. To increase the response rate in this advocacy study, three follow-up contacts were made. A postcard was sent for the first follow-up contact one week after the survey packet was mailed. The second follow-up contact was made three weeks after the initial mail-out. The second follow-up included a new cover letter, a second questionnaire, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for returning the questionnaire. A final postcard was sent for the third follow-up contact five weeks after the initial mail-out. Follow-up procedures reminded the potential participants that a response was needed from all who received a survey packet.

The mailed survey procedures followed in this study resulted in a return rate of 52.7%. A total of 797 members returned the questionnaire and 607 (40.2%) of the teacher educators met the criteria for participation in the study. The researcher was interested in describing current practices and therefore was interested in responses from teacher educators who are currently teaching preservice early childhood professionals or had taught preservice courses in the last three years. Membership in the selected organizations includes early childhood professionals who are employed in a variety of positions including program directors, administrators, and retired professionals. All potential participants were asked to return the questionnaire if they did not fit the criteria

for the study. It is unknown how many of the 1,511 potential participants did not fit the criteria for the study and simply discarded the document.

Although the entire population of early childhood teacher educators is unknown, it is likely that the relevant trends regarding advocacy instruction in preservice early childhood preparation programs is discernable from the return rate of this study. Participants who returned the questionnaire and met the criteria for inclusion in the study represented forty-eight of the fifty states and all geographic regions of the United States. Generalizations to the entire population of early childhood teacher educators should be made with caution but conclusions can be made about the current trends in advocacy training in preprofessional programs.

The second phase of data collection, telephone interviews, began after the first mail-out of the questionnaire. The selected leaders of early childhood professional organizations participated in telephone interviews and were not included in the mailed questionnaire component of the study. The leaders were contacted initially by e-mail or telephone to determine their willingness to participate in the study and to set a date for the telephone interview. The purpose of the study and the research safeguards were explained. The researcher called participants on the designated date and time. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher asked permission to tape record the interview for reporting accuracy. Research procedures and safeguards were read to the participant before beginning the interview. The researcher recorded responses on the telephone interview protocol form.

Data Analysis

A cross-sectional survey design was used for this study with data collected through a mailed questionnaire and telephone interviews. Quantitative analysis methods were used to analyze the questionnaire and qualitative procedures were used to analyze the telephone interviews and the open-ended data in the questionnaire. Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989) identified five purposes for combining methods in a single study. The purpose of mixed methods in this study was to examine different facets of the problem and to add breadth to the study (Greene et al.). The primary purpose of the study was to describe the current advocacy practices of teacher educators and to determine the perceived importance of advocacy instruction in early childhood preparation programs therefore descriptive statistics were employed for much of the data analysis.

Surveys were sorted by institution type and coded for entry into a database as they were returned to the researcher. Each survey was matched to the tracking codes in the database for follow-up contacts. Data from each questionnaire was read to a person who entered the information into the database. The reader also served as a proofreader to the person entering the data. Printouts of the database were then checked by another set of reviewers. The completed database was imported into SAS and another check was made to ensure that the transfer of data was complete. All statistics were generated using this statistical software package.

Telephone interviews were transcribed from the audiotapes and entered into a word processor. The researcher reviewed each transcript and cross-referenced the information with the information recorded on the interview protocol. Categories emerged

from the initial review of the data. QSR NUD*IST (nonnumerical unstructured data [for] index search [and] theorizing) software was used to further analyze the interview data. This software was developed by Qualitative Solutions and Research PTY Ltd. (QSR) to support the management of qualitative data analysis projects. Transcribed data for each interview was entered into text files. The text was searched and indexed (coded) by the defined text units.

There are eight research questions in this study. Descriptive statistics were presented using a chart essay method of data presentation. The chart essay method of data presentation uses a defined format of a chart to graphically represent the results, followed by a list of trends or notes (Chauvin, 1998; Haensly, Lupkowski & McNamara, 1987). The chart allows the reader to visualize the information rather than studying technically written text. The notes guide the reader to the significant facts about the item. To assist the reader in evaluating the information, each item is presented on separate pages (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). The data analysis procedure for each research question is presented in the following section.

Research Question One

The first problem was to determine the extent of advocacy training included in the preparation of preservice early childhood professionals. The data needed for research question one is the hours of advocacy training included in courses taught by survey participants located in question six of the teacher educator questionnaire. This question measures the number of hours of advocacy instruction included in classroom instruction by the participants.

The general descriptive statistics technique of calculating frequencies and percentages were utilized for this research question. Frequencies were calculated for two-year and four-year institutions and presented in a chart for comparison.

Research Question Two

The second problem was to identify the advocacy skills and strategies teacher educators include in the preparation of preservice early childhood professionals. The data needed for research question two is (a) the inclusion of advocacy skills reported by participants and (b) the inclusion of advocacy strategies reported by participants. The data needed for research question two is located in question five of the teacher educator questionnaire. This question asks the participant to report the frequency of inclusion of selected advocacy activities and strategies.

Frequencies and percentages for each advocacy skill and strategy were reported in chart essays. The mean and standard deviation was calculated for each response choice. The mean of advocacy skill was determined by averaging the first 11 items in question five. The mean of advocacy strategies was determined by averaging the last nine items in question five. Means were calculated for two-year and four-year institutions and presented in a table for comparison.

Research Question Three

The third problem was to identify and rank the reasons teacher educators include or do not include advocacy training in the preparation of preservice early childhood professionals. The data needed for research question three is the reason cited for including or not including advocacy training in the preparation of preservice early

childhood professionals. The data needed for research question three is located in questions seven and eight of the teacher educator questionnaire. The questions ask each respondent to rank each reason given for including or not including advocacy instruction in the courses taught.

The number of persons among the total group selecting each response was converted to a mean value for each rank given for the item. Tables were created showing the overall mean and standard deviation for each reason given for including and not including advocacy and for the two-year and four-year institutions for comparison.

Research Question Four

The fourth problem was to identify the importance of selected advocacy topics and skills in the preparation of preservice early childhood professionals. The data needed for research question four is the importance attached to advocacy skills, strategies, and issues in the field of early childhood by survey participants. The data needed for research question four is located in questions nine and ten of the teacher educator questionnaire. The questions ask each respondent to report how important they believe the selected items are in teaching advocacy to preservice early childhood professionals.

The importance of each advocacy skill, strategy, and issue was reported as percentages and the mean and standard deviation was calculated for each response. Frequencies and percentages for each advocacy skill, strategy, and topic were reported in chart essays. Overall scores were calculated across items. Means were calculated and presented in a table to illustrate the overall rating of the importance of inclusion of

advocacy training in preparation programs. Means were reported for two-year and four-year institutions in a table for comparison.

Research Question Five

The interview of leaders in the field of early childhood provided the data for research question five. The fifth problem was to identify the advocacy skills and activities leaders in the field of early childhood education believe are important in the preparation of preservice early childhood professionals. The data needed for research question five is the importance attached to advocacy skills and issues in the field of early childhood reported by participants in the leadership interview protocol.

The interview questions measure the importance of identified advocacy skills and issues as well as the beliefs of early childhood leaders regarding the inclusion of advocacy training in preservice preparation programs. The mean for advocacy importance was calculated by averaging the responses of each participant to question seven in the interview protocol and the results were reported in a table. The mean for importance of advocacy was calculated by averaging the responses to each item in question eight in the interview protocol and the results were presented in a table.

The beliefs of leaders in the field of early childhood were described using qualitative data techniques. Data was evaluated using the qualitative statistics analysis package, QSR NUD*IST. Using automatic coding of the data via search techniques designed to generate code, a data matrix was prepared. Analysis for each question included reports listing text units, coding, and tables showing frequencies of text units.

Research Question Six

The sixth problem was to describe the advocacy activities of teacher educators. The data needed for research question six is the advocacy activities of teacher educators. The data needed for research question six is located in question 11 of the teacher educator questionnaire. The question measures each participant's participation or non-participation in selected advocacy activities.

Milbrath (1965) in a hierarchy of political involvement and Lindamood (1995) in a continuum of advocacy involvement described various levels of involvement in advocacy. Milbrath (1965) developed a hierarchy of political involvement that includes three levels: spectator, transitional activities and gladiatorial activities. Lindamood (1995) developed an advocacy involvement continuum to illustrate multiple levels of advocacy involvement. The continuum includes the roles of dreamer, donator, volunteer, initiator, and fighter with increasing amounts of personal involvement and risk in each role (Lindamood,1995).

For the purpose of this study, the participation activities in question eleven of the teacher educator questionnaire were placed in five categories representing increasing amounts of personal involvement and risk with 1 being the lowest and 5 representing the highest amount of involvement and risk. The categories used in this study are: Level 1-Spectator/Dreamer, Level 2-Donator, Level 3-Volunteer, Level 4-Initiator, Level 5-Gladiator/Fighter. Each activity is weighted from 1-5 depending on the level of assigned advocacy: level 1 activities received 1 point and level 5 activities received 5 points.

The number of persons among the total group selecting each response is reported in tables as percentages. Participation in activities is presented for the group and for two-year and four-year institutions.

Multiple regression analysis is used for relating two or more independent variables to a dependent variable (Cody & Smith, 1991). In this study, multiple regression analysis was used to identify a subset of independent variables that might be useful in predicting the dependent variable: participation in advocacy. The independent variables were: advocacy skills included in classes taught as measured by the mean of the first 11 items in question five in the questionnaire; advocacy activities included in classes taught as measured by the mean of the last nine items in question five of the questionnaire; hours of advocacy included in a semester in courses taught as measured by the score of question six; the importance of advocacy skills in the preparation of early childhood professionals as measured by the mean of the first 11 items in question nine of the questionnaire; the importance of advocacy activities as measured by the mean of the last nine items in question nine of the questionnaire; and the importance of advocacy content as measured by the mean of items in question 10 of the questionnaire.

After identification of the subset of independent variables, a *post hoc* correlation analysis was performed between the set of identified independent variables and the subcomponents of participation: Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4 and Level 5 of advocacy participation. The results of the regression analysis and the post hoc correlation analysis are presented in tables.

Research Question Seven

The seventh problem was to determine if there are differences in the preparation of preservice early childhood professionals among demographic groups. The data needed for research question seven is located in questions 2 and 3, as well as the demographic information included in questions 12, 13, 14 and 15 in the final section of the teacher educator questionnaire.

The demographic information was reported using the descriptive statistics of frequency and percentages and presented in tables. The demographic information was analyzed using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to determine if any significant differences existed among the various groups of interest. MANOVA tests whether mean differences among groups on a combination of dependent variables are likely to have occurred by chance. MANOVA has advantages over ANOVA when there are multiple dependent variables including: reduction of an inflated Type I error; researchers improve the chance of discovering what changes as a result of interactions; and differences may be revealed that are not shown in separate ANOVA's (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). The data from this study were analyzed using a three-way multivariate analysis of variance with institution type, region of the country, and years of program operation as the categorical independent variables, and hours of class time devoted to advocacy, extent of inclusion of advocacy skills, and extent of inclusion of advocacy strategies for the multivariate dependent variable. The results of the analysis are presented in a table.

Research Question Eight

The eighth problem was to identify the advocacy topics and skills to include in a model advocacy training program for preservice early childhood professionals. The data needed for research question eight is the importance attached to selected advocacy skills and issues in the field of early childhood by survey participants in both the teacher educator questionnaire and the interviews of leaders in the field. The data needed for research question eight is located in questions nine and ten of the teacher educator questionnaire and question seven in the interview protocol for leaders in the field. The questions ask each participant to report how important they believe the selected items are in teaching advocacy to preservice early childhood professionals.

The importance of each advocacy skill, advocacy activity, and advocacy issue were reported as percentages and the mean and standard deviations were calculated for each response. Overall scores were calculated across items. Means were calculated for an overall rating of the importance of inclusion of advocacy training in preparation programs. Means were reported for two-year and four-year institutions and leaders in the field of early childhood education. The scores on the items were compared qualitatively to the items identified in the literature as important in advocacy training. A model for teaching advocacy in preprofessional preparation programs was suggested based on the findings of the study and the strategies revealed in the review of literature.

Summary

This study surveyed selected early childhood teacher educators who currently prepare undergraduate preservice early childhood professionals in two-year and four-year

institutions throughout the United States to identify and evaluate the existing advocacy training practices in preservice education. Data was collected through questionnaires and selected telephone interviews. This chapter outlined the methodology utilized in this study to answer the eight research questions.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The primary purpose of this study was to describe the advocacy training practices of selected early childhood teacher educators who currently prepare undergraduate preservice professionals in two-year and four-year institutions throughout the United States. Additionally, the study was designed to: determine what leaders in the field of early care and education believe constitutes appropriate advocacy training for early childhood preprofessionals; describe the advocacy activities of teacher educators; determine if there is a difference in the advocacy preparation of two-year and four-year institutions; and recommend a model for including advocacy in preservice teacher preparation programs. The study assessed the current advocacy practices of early childhood teacher educators.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do teacher educators include advocacy training in the preparation of preservice teacher educators?
2. What are the advocacy strategies currently included in the preparation programs of preservice early childhood professionals?
3. What are the reasons for including or not including advocacy training in preservice courses?

4. What do preservice teacher educators see as priorities in the advocacy training of early childhood professionals?
5. According to the leaders in the field of early childhood education, what are the priorities for advocacy training of preservice teachers?
6. In what advocacy activities do early childhood teacher educators participate?
7. Are there differences in the advocacy training of preservice teacher educators according to selected demographic categories?
8. What advocacy activities constitute a model advocacy program for preservice teacher educators?

The participants in the study included 607 early childhood teacher educators who currently teach early childhood preprofessional courses and 14 leaders of early childhood professional organizations who currently serve as the president or vice president of the selected organization. The early childhood teacher educators responded to a mailed questionnaire and the early childhood leaders participated in telephone interviews. The results of the study are discussed in three sections. The first section includes the demographic data collected about the participants in the study. The second section provides the analysis for each research question. The third section of this chapter examines the relationship between two-year and four-year institutions.

Demographic Data

The demographic data of the study describe and identify the similarities and differences among the participants. Teacher educators and leaders of professional organizations from across the United States participated in this study. The demographic

data describing the groups that participated in the study is presented in the following two sections.

Mailed Questionnaire

Early childhood teacher educators from across the United State returned the mailed questionnaire. The total number of participants who returned the questionnaire and currently teach early childhood preprofessional preparation courses in two-year and four-year institutions was 607. Sixty-seven percent (*n*=405) of the participants who completed and returned the mailed questionnaire taught in a four-year institution and 33% (*n*=202) taught in a two-year institution. Participants supplied the name of the state where they teach and the states were coded to one of four regions in the United States based on data from the Bureau of the Census, 2000. The geographic regions of the participants in the study are shown in Table 1. Participants in the study represent all geographic regions of the United States and forty-eight states. As show in Table 1, more participants in the study are from the Midwestern region (35%) and the fewest participants are from the Northeastern region (19%) of the United States.

Table 1

Percentage of Participant Institutions Located in Four Regions of the United States

Region of the country	*n*	%
Northeast	112	18.6
Midwest	212	35.2
South	151	25.0
West	127	21.1
Missing data	5	0.8

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Participants in the study also responded to questions about their gender, age, ethnicity, years of teaching experience in current position, years of operation of their institution's early childhood program, size of institution, membership in professional organizations and the courses taught. Table 2 displays the distribution of participants by personal characteristics. The early childhood teacher educators that participated in the study were predominately female (94%) reflecting the trend in early childhood education. The data in Table 3 show that the majority of the participants (69%) were between the ages of 46 and 60 and were European Americans (91%). The largest group of teacher educators in this study (53%) were in their current position from 0-10 years, although written comments indicated that many participants were teacher educators for longer than 10 years.

Table 2

Distribution of Participants by Personal Characteristics

Demographic Variable	*n*	%
Gender		
Male	36	6.1
Female	550	93.9
Missing data	21	3.5
Age		
25 and under	0	0.0
26-30	5	0.8
31-35	20	3.3
36-40	27	4.5
41-45	59	9.9
46-50	128	21.4
51-55	158	26.4
55-60	127	21.2
61-65	37	6.2
66 and over	37	6.2
Missing data	9	1.5
Ethnicity `		
African American	17	2.9
Hispanic American	8	1.4
Asian American	5	0.9
European American	533	91.4
Other	20	3.4
Missing data	24	4.0
Years in current position		
0-5	146	26.6
6-10	145	26.4
11-15	88	16.0
16-20	67	12.2
21-25	52	9.5
26-30	35	6.4
31-35	10	1.8
36-40	5	0.9
41-42	1	0.2
Missing data	58	9.8

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

The distribution of the independent variables describing the characteristics of the institutions where the participants currently teach are listed in Table 3. The majority of the institutions (81%) have a student population of less than 20,000 students. Institutions with less than 5,000 students had the largest representation in the study (32%). Table 3 further reveals that the early childhood programs of the participants have been in operation for many years. Most (57%) of the programs have been in operation for more than 20 years with 42% in operation for more than 25 years.

Table 3

Distribution of Participants by Institutional Characteristics

Institutional variable	*n*	%
Size of Institution		
Less than 5,000	188	31.7
5,000-10,000	133	22.4
11,000-20,000	159	26.8
21,000-30,000	66	11.1
31,000-40,000	23	3.9
41,000-50,000	12	2.0
Greater than 50,000	12	2.0
Missing data	14	2.3
Years of Program Operation		
0-5	48	8.3
6-10	55	9.5
11-15	58	10.0
16-20	91	15.7
21-25	86	14.8
25 +	242	41.7
Missing data	27	4.4

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Early childhood organizations frequently provide advocacy information and training to their members. Participants indicated their membership in various early childhood professional organizations. Table 4 presents the data pertaining to membership in four early childhood professional organizations. The table reveals that 99% of the participants are members of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the largest early childhood professional organization. All participants indicated that they held membership in at least one professional organization.

Table 4

Distribution of Membership in Early Childhood Organizations

Organization	*n*	%
NAEYC	594	98.5
ACEI	88	47.8
NAECTE	386	64.0
ACCESS	87	14.4
Other	208	34.5
Missing data	4	0.6

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

The participants in the study identified the courses they currently teach and indicated whether the course is required by their institution. Table 5 shows the distribution of early childhood courses taught by participants in two-year and four-year institutions. The majority of the participants in the two-year (78%) and four-year (73%) institutions teach a curriculum/methods course.

Table 5

Distribution of Early Childhood Courses Taught by Participants in 2-year and 4-year Institutions

Early Childhood Courses	2-year		4-year	
	n	%	*n*	%
Foundations of Early Childhood	69	34.1	104	25.7
Introduction to Early Childhood Education	123	60.6	150	37.0
Child Growth and Development	131	64.9	170	42.1
Curriculum/Methods Courses	157	77.7	293	72.5
Hoe, School, Community Relationships	104	51.5	128	31.8
Practicum in Early Childhood Education	139	68.8	218	53.8
Student Teaching Seminar	98	48.5	159	39.2
Advocacy	32	15.8	40	10.0
Other	88	43.6	146	36.0

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Table 6 shows the advocacy courses and advocacy textbooks currently used in the preparation of preservice professionals. Two-year institutions show a slightly higher percentage of participants (16%) teaching advocacy courses. The number of two-year institutions that require an advocacy course (13%) is also higher than required advocacy courses in four-year institution (9%). There were 607 participants in the study and only

71 of the 607 participants who took part in the study reported using an advocacy textbook.

Table 6

Distribution of Advocacy Courses Taught and Advocacy Textbooks Used by 2-year and 4-year Institutions

	2-year		4-year	
	n	%	*n*	%
Advocacy course				
Taught	32	15.9	40	10.0
Required	26	12.9	35	8.7
Advocacy textbook	19	9.4	52	12.8

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Telephone Interview

Fourteen leaders of early childhood professional organizations participated in the telephone interviews. The fourteen leaders were Presidents and Vice Presidents of NAEYC, Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI), the Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) and the NAEYC state affiliates of California, Michigan, New York, and Texas. These Presidents and Vice Presidents represent the leading professional organizations of early childhood educators. Eleven of the leaders interviewed either currently teach or have taught early childhood courses as either full-time or adjunct faculty. In addition to faculty positions, the leaders currently hold positions including education consultants, directors of various programs that serve young children and families, curriculum specialists and deans of colleges. Table 7 shows additional demographic data describing the selected leaders of early childhood professional organizations.

The data in Table 7 show that the age, gender, ethnicity and organizational affiliations held by the leaders corresponds to the demographic data of the participants in

Table 7

Distribution of Demographic Data of Selected Leaders

Demographic Variable	*n*	%
Gender		
Male	2	14.3
Female	12	85.7
Age		
31-35	1	7.1
36-40	2	14.3
41-45	2	14.3
46-50	1	7.1
51-55	5	35.7
55-60	1	7.1
61-65	2	14.3
Ethnicity		
African American	1	7.1
Hispanic American	2	14.3
Asian American	0	0.0
European American	11	78.6
Organization		
NAEYC	13	93.0
ACEI	7	50.0
NAECTE	2	14.3
ACCESS	1	7.1
Other	12	85.7
Highest Degree Earned		
BA or BS	3	21.4
MA, MS, MEd	4	28.6
PhD or EdD	7	50.0

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

the mailed questionnaire reported in Table 2. While a larger percentage of the leaders of organizations are male, 14% compared to only 6% of the participants in the mailed questionnaire, females represent a large majority in both groups. More leaders (36%) are in the 51-55 age bracket which mirrors the age bracket with the largest number of participants (26%) in the early childhood educator group. Table 7 also reveals high involvement in professional organizations with all leaders reporting membership in more than one organization. Fifty percent of the leaders have a doctorate degree with 79% holding degrees above the bachelor level.

Data Analysis

This study describes the current advocacy training practices of early childhood teacher educators in preprofessional preparation programs. Eight research questions guided the study. The following section is organized around the eight research questions. In each section, the research question is restated and the analysis of the data relevant to the question is presented.

Analysis of Research Question One

To what extent do teacher educators include advocacy training in the preparation of preservice teacher educators?

The first research question concerned the extent of advocacy training included in preservice teacher preparation. Participants selected the amount of class time spent on advocacy instruction in a semester from the list of responses. Teacher educators spend few hours a semester on advocacy instruction and discussion of advocacy issues. As indicated in Figure 1, most teacher educators (40%) reported spending three hours or less

on explicit, planned advocacy instruction and less than 5% reported devoting 21+ hours to advocacy instruction. Participants in two-year and four-year institutions spend approximately the same amounts of class time on advocacy activities with four-year institutions showing slightly more participants selecting 10 to 21+ class hours. instruction in two-year (*n*=202) and four-year (*n*=405) institutions.

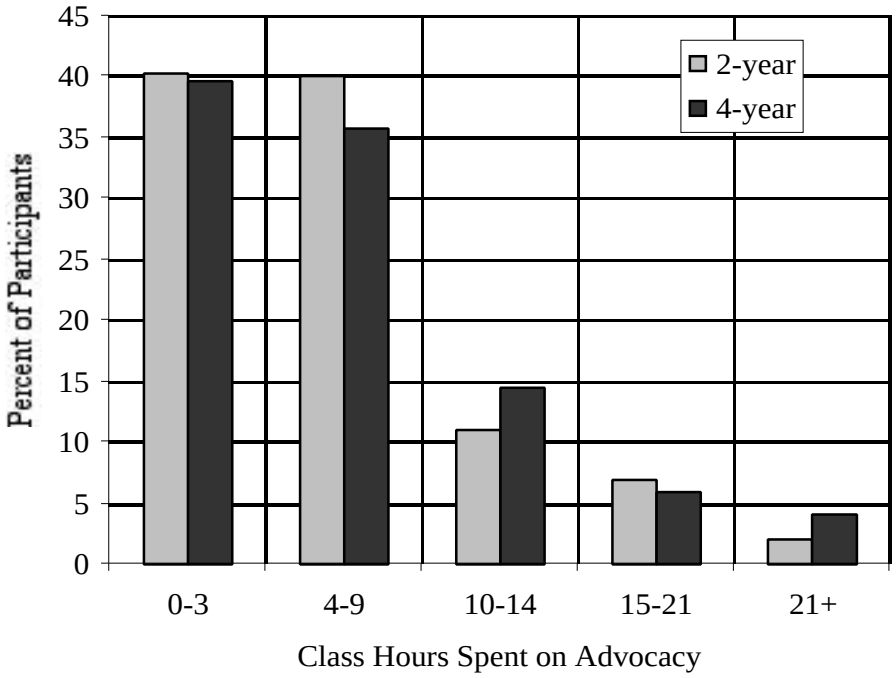

Figure 1. Percentage of participants reporting the number of hours devoted to advocacy

Notes:

1. 10 responses (1.6%) were missing data.
2. 238 participants (40%) reported 0-3 hours.
3. 221 participants (37%) reported 4-9 hours.
4. 80 participants (13.3%) reported 10-14 hours.
5. 38 participants (6.4%) reported 15-21 hours.
6. 20 participants (3.4%) reported 21+ hours.

Analysis of Research Question Two

What are the advocacy skills and strategies currently included in the preparation programs of preservice early childhood professionals?

The second research question addresses specific advocacy skills and strategies used by the participants in advocacy instruction. Part 2 of the questionnaire asked the 607 early childhood educators to report the advocacy skills and activities currently included in the preparation of preservice teachers. Using a Likert scale (i.e. Frequently-1, Sometimes-2, Rarely-3, and Never-4), participants reported the frequency of the inclusion of advocacy skills and activities identified in the literature. The data for research question two is presented in two sections: advocacy skills and advocacy strategies. Each section will contain the following components: chart essays depicting the percentages of participants selecting each Likert rating; a table showing the means (M) of each advocacy skill or activity; and a table showing the means (M) by institution.

Advocacy skills. The advocacy skills identified in the literature included the following:

- Effective communication skills
- Development of interpersonal skills
- Understanding of the professional role
- Knowledge of current issues related to children, families and the profession
- Knowledge of the conditions of children and families in society
- Public policy affecting children, families and programs
- Code of ethics as it relates to advocacy

- Definition of advocacy and advocate
- Knowledge of the political process
- How to communicate with legislative representatives
- Knowledge of professional organizations that support children

The following chart essay (Figures 2-13) allowed for closer examination of the responses for individual items in the process of assessing the extent of the inclusion of advocacy skills in current teaching practice in undergraduate programs. Information from each item was presented using the following format: 1) item is restated, 2) percent of responses are graphically presented, and 3) a notes section provides narrative explanations and/or limitations (Chauvin, 1998; Haensly, Lupkowski & McNamara, 1987). Each item analysis was presented separately to more carefully document the use of advocacy practices in two-year and four-year institutions.

Skill #1

Effective communication skills

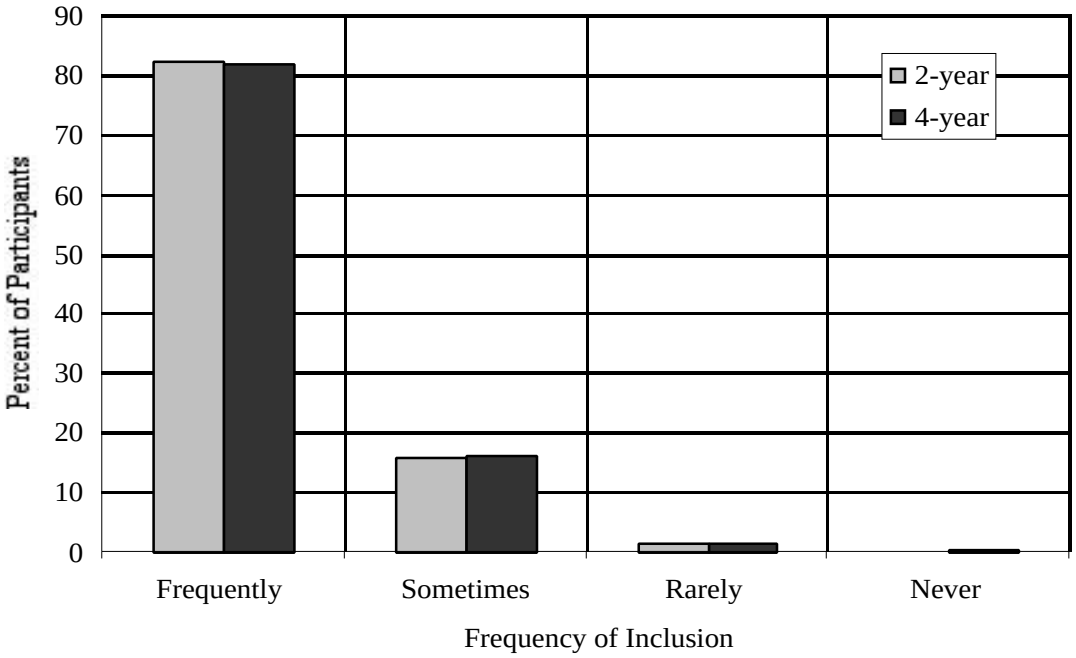

Figure 2. Distribution of responses for Skill #1

Notes:

1. 9 responses (1.5%) were missing data.
2. 490 (82%) of the participants frequently include effective communication skills in courses taught.
3. 97 participants (16.2%) reported sometimes including effective communication skills in course content.
4. 9 participants (1.5%) reported rarely teaching effective communication skills.
5. Only 2 participants (.33%) reported never including effective communication skills in course content.

Skill #2

Development of interpersonal skills

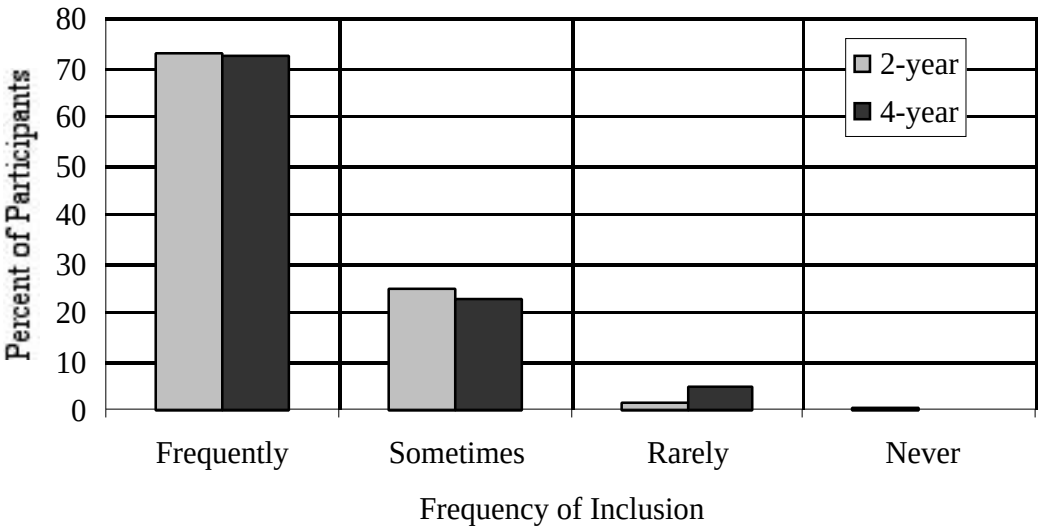

Figure 3. Distribution of responses for Skill #2.

Notes:

1. 12 responses (2.0%) were missing data.
2. 432 participants (72.6%) frequently include the development of interpersonal skills.
3. 139 participants (23.4%) reported sometimes including the development of interpersonal skills.
4. 22 participants (3.7%) reported rarely teaching the development of interpersonal skills.
5. Only two participants (.33%) reported never including the development of interpersonal skills.

Skill #3

Understanding the professional role

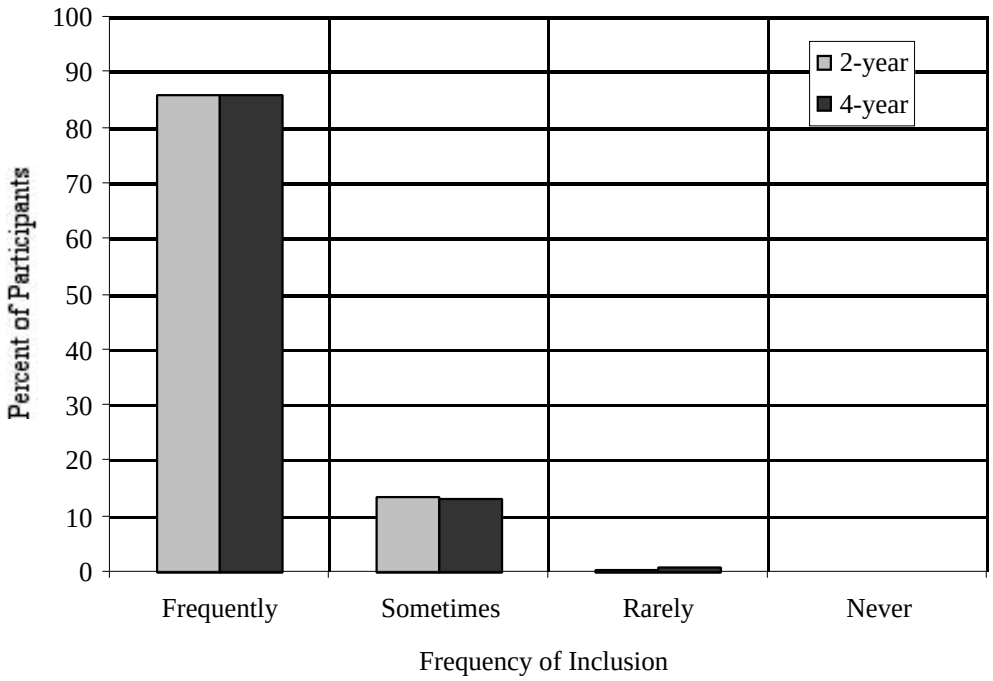

Figure 4. Distribution of responses for Skill #3.

Notes:

1. 6 responses (0.99%) were missing data.
2. 517 participants (86%) frequently include understanding the professional role in courses taught.
3. 80 participants (13.3%) reported sometimes including understanding the professional role in course content.
4. 4 participants (0.67%) reported rarely teaching the understanding of the professional role.
5. Zero participants reported never including understanding the professional role.

Skill #4

Knowledge of current issues and events that affect children, families and the profession

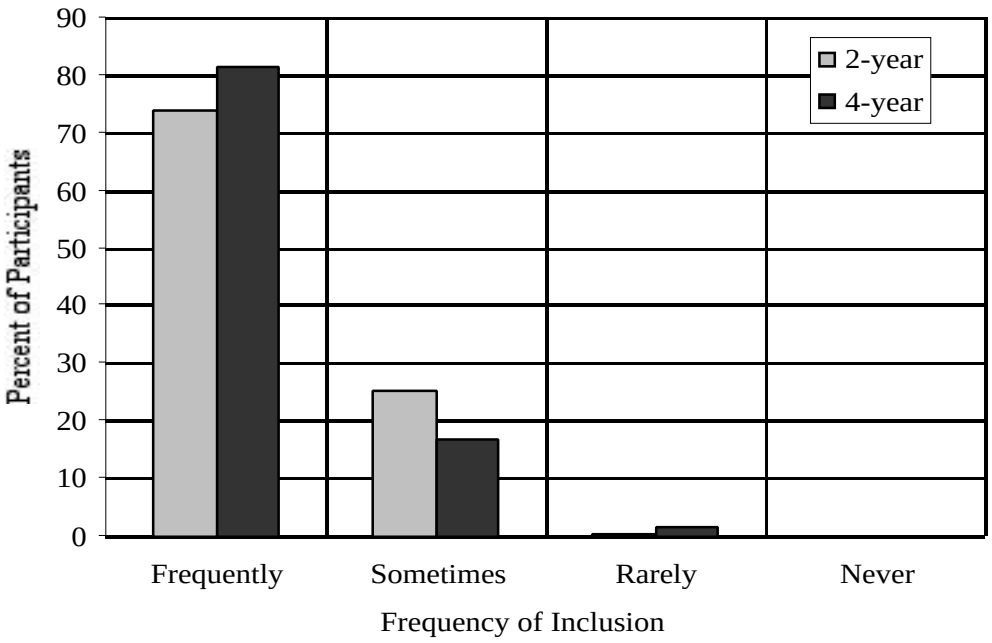

Figure 5. Distribution of responses for Skill #4.

Notes:

1. 6 responses (0.99%) were missing data.
2. 475 participants (79.0%) frequently include knowledge of current issues and events.
3. 119 participants (19.8%) reported sometimes including knowledge of current issues and events.
4. 7 participants (1.2%) reported rarely teaching knowledge of current issues and events.
5. Zero participants reported never including knowledge of current issues and events.

Skill #5

Knowledge of the conditions of children and families in society

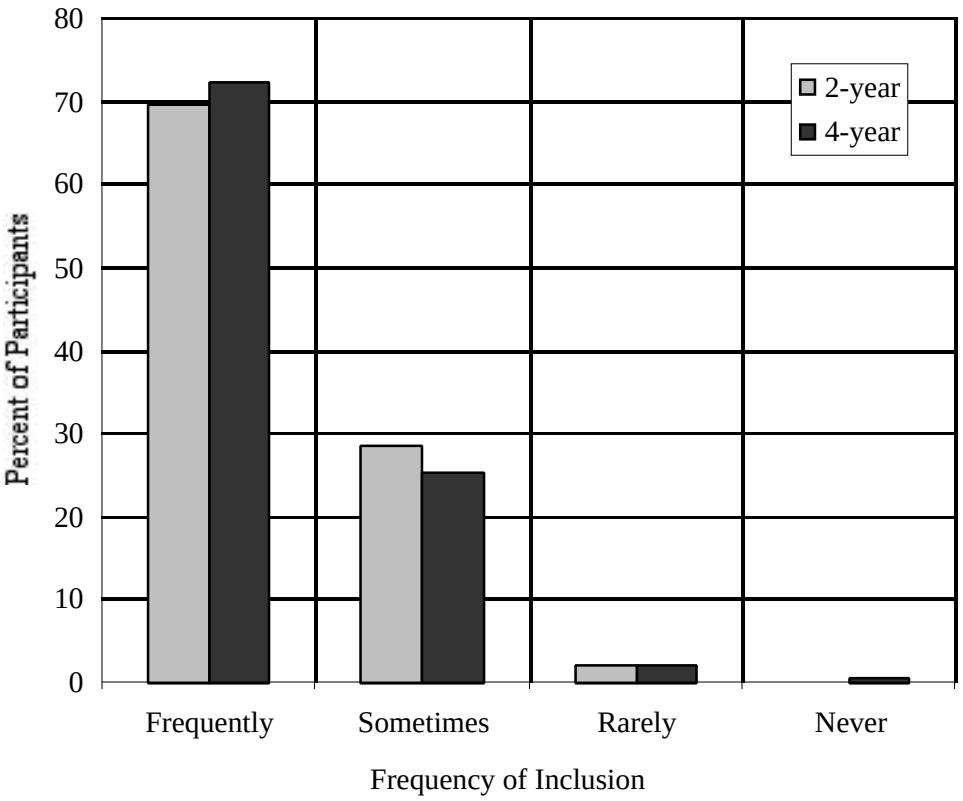

Figure 6. Distribution of responses for Skill #5.

Notes:

1. 7 responses (1.2%) were missing data.
2. 428 participants (71.3%) frequently include knowledge of conditions of children and families.
3. 158 participants (26.3%) reported sometimes including knowledge of conditions of children and families.
4. 12 participants (2.0%) reported rarely teaching knowledge of conditions of children and families.
5. 2 participants (0.33%) reported never including knowledge of conditions of children and families.

Skill #6
Public policy affecting children, families and programs

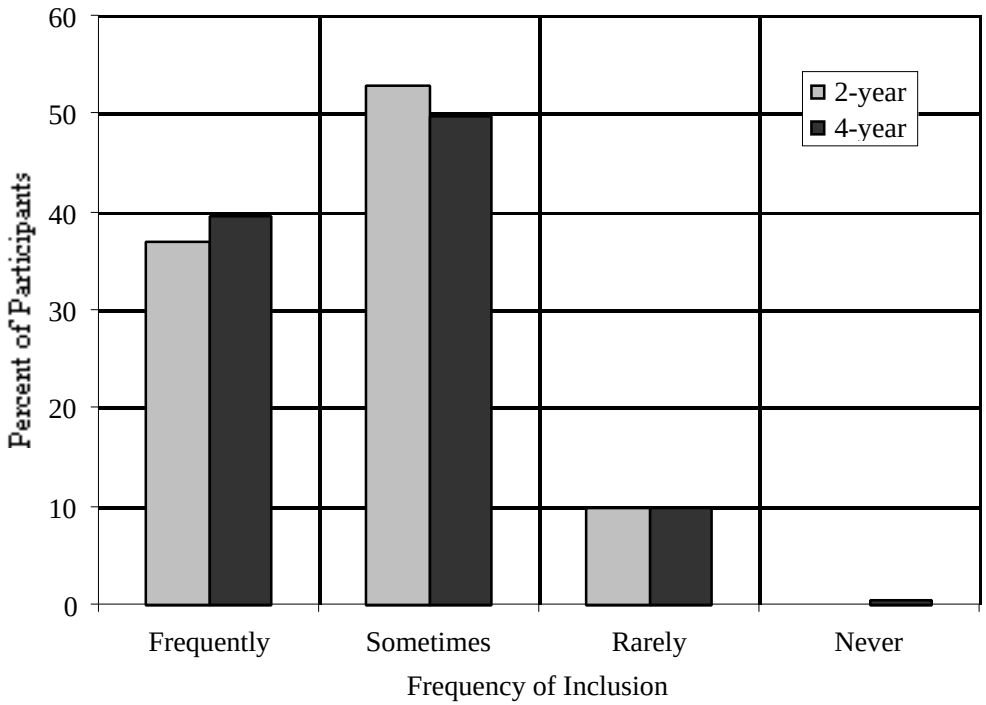

Figure 7. Distribution of responses for Skill #6.

Notes:

1. 9 responses (1.5%) were missing data.
2. 232 participants (38.8%) frequently include public policy affecting children and families.
3. 305 participants (51%) reported sometimes including public policy affecting children and families.
4. 59 participants (9.9%) reported rarely teaching public policy affecting children and families.
5. 2 participants (0.33%) reported never including public policy affecting children and families.

Skill #7
Code of ethics as it relates to advocacy

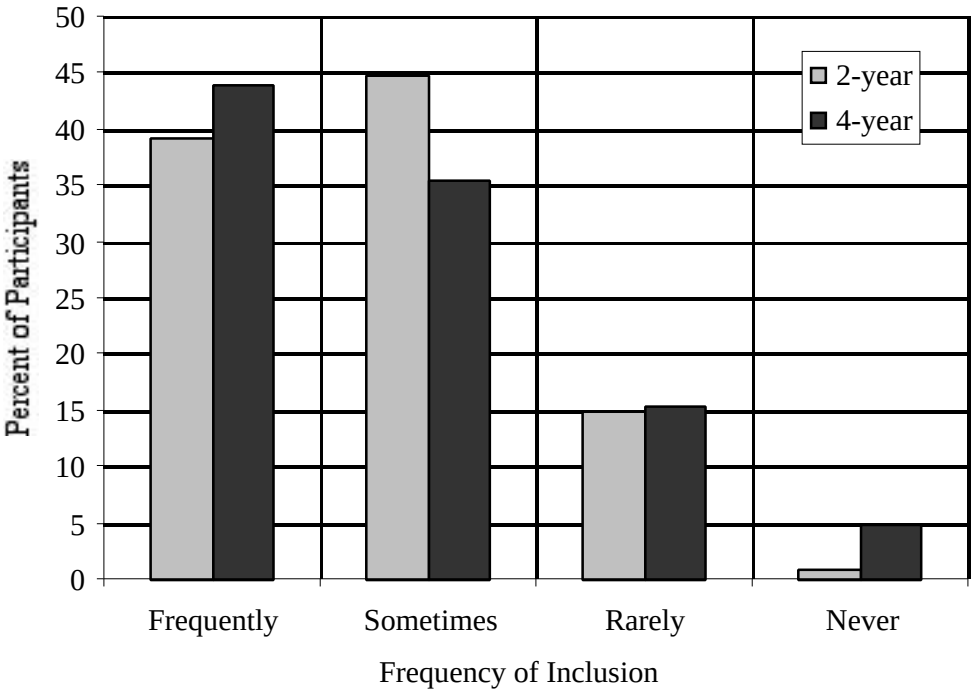

Figure 8. Distribution of responses for Skill #7.

Notes:

1. 12 responses (2.0%) were missing data.
2. 252 participants (42.4%) frequently include code of ethics as it relates to advocacy.
3. 230 participants (38.7%) reported sometimes including code of ethics as it relates to advocacy.
4. 91 participants (15.3%) reported rarely teaching code of ethics as it relates to advocacy.
5. 22 participants (3.7%) reported never including code of ethics as it relates to advocacy.

Skill #8

Definition of advocacy and advocate

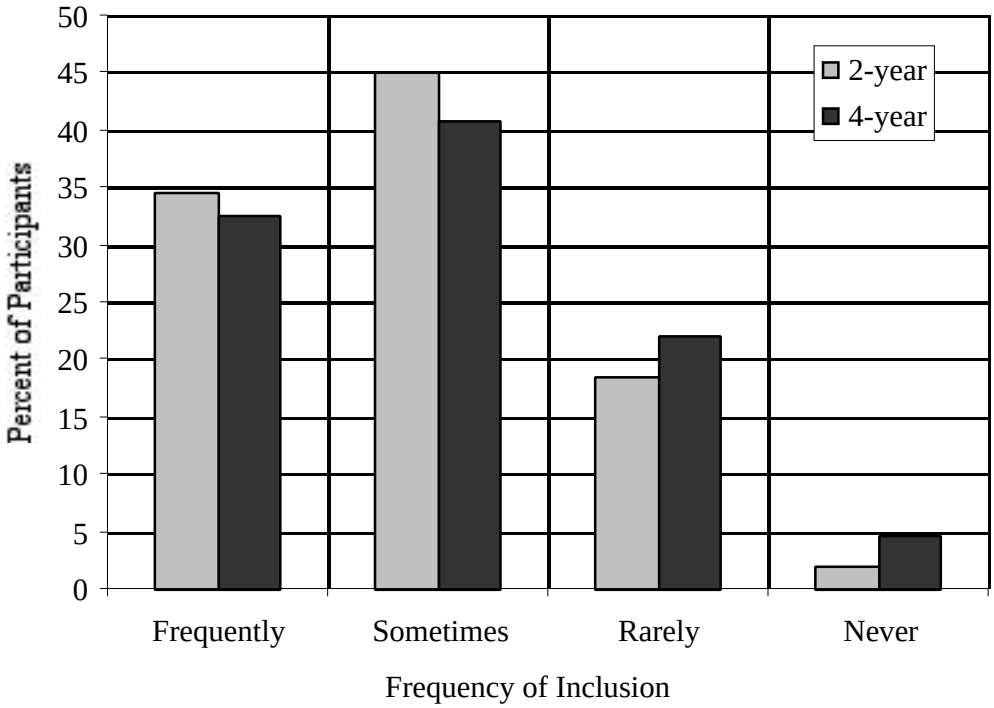

Figure 9. Distribution of responses for Skill #8.

Notes:

1. 12 responses (2.0%) were missing data.
2. 198 participants (33.3%) frequently include the definition of advocacy and advocate.
3. 251 participants (42.2%) reported sometimes including the definition of advocacy and advocate.
4. 124 participants (20.8%) reported rarely teaching the definition of advocacy and advocate.
5. 22 participants (3.7%) reported never including the definition of advocacy and advocate.

Skill #9

Knowledge of the political process

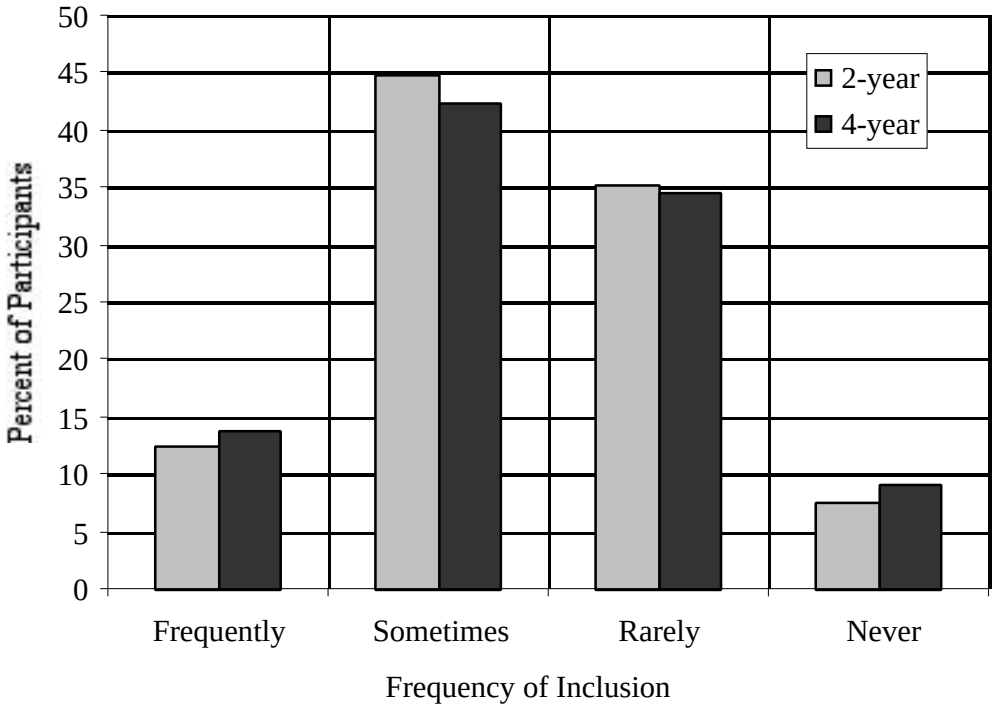

Figure 10. Distribution of responses for Skill #9

Notes:

1. 10 responses (1.6%) were missing data.
2. 80 participants (13.4%) frequently include knowledge of the political process.
3. 258 participants (43.2%) reported sometimes including knowledge of the political process.
4. 208 participants (34.8%) reported rarely teaching knowledge of the political process.
5. 51 participants (8.5%) reported never including knowledge of the political process.

Skill #10

How to communicate with legislative representatives

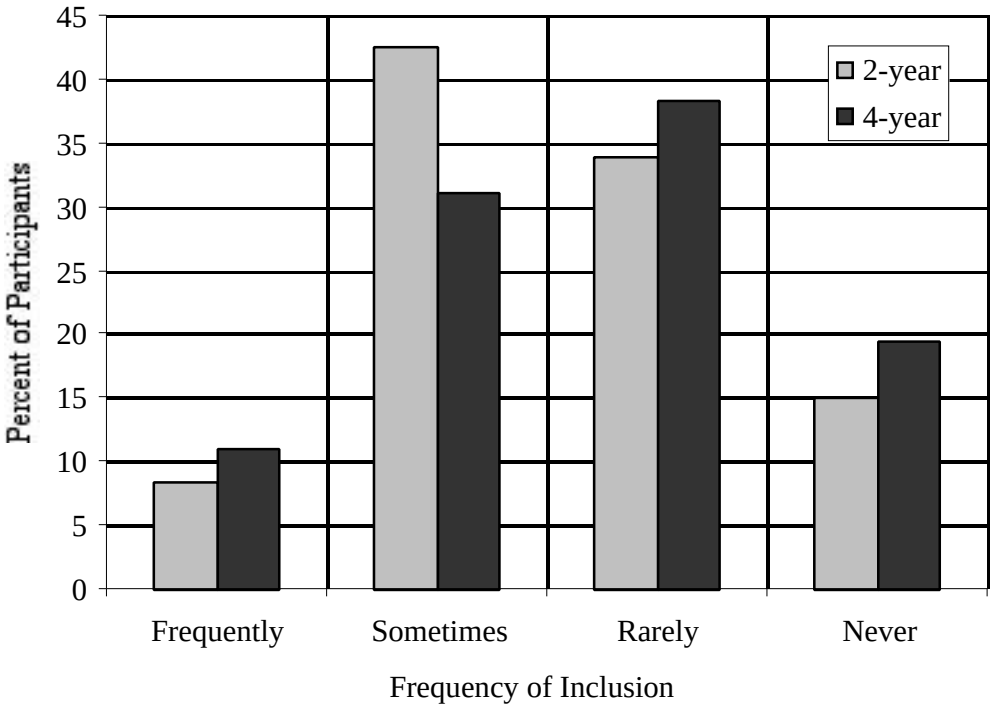

Figure 11. Distribution of responses for Skill #10

Notes:

1. 9 responses (1.5%) were missing data.
2. 61 participants (10.2%) frequently include how to communicate with legislative representatives.
3. 209 participants (35.0%) reported sometimes including how to communicate with legislative representatives.
4. 221 participants (37.0%) reported rarely teaching how to communicate with legislative representatives.
5. 107 participants (17.9%) reported never including how to communicate with legislative representatives.

Skill #11

Knowledge of professional organizations that support children

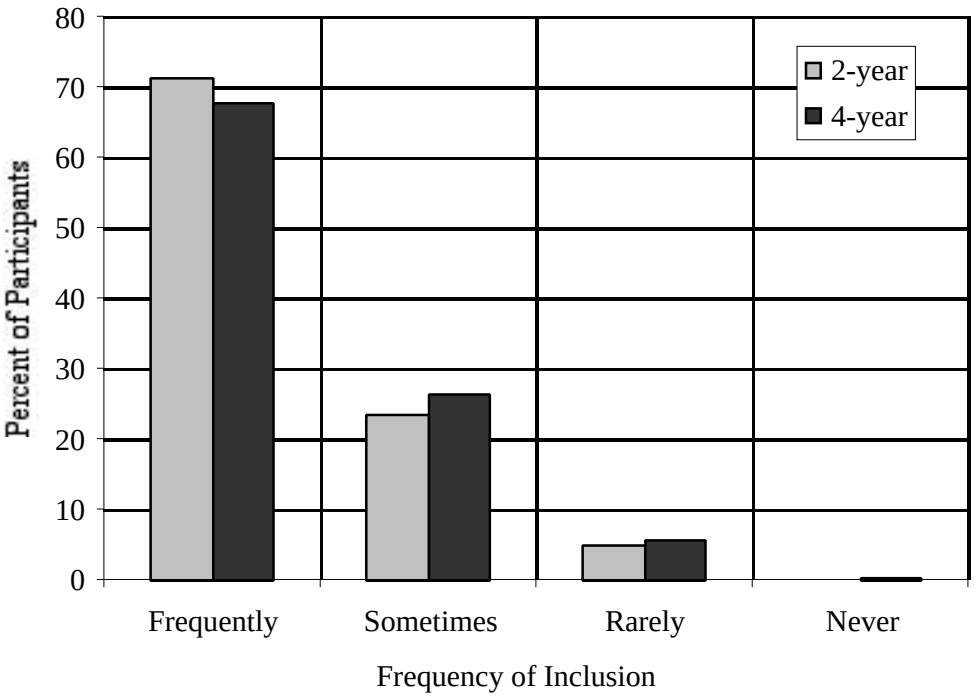

Figure 12. Distribution of responses for Skill #11

Notes:

1. 7 responses (1.2%) were missing data.
2. 415 participants (69.2%) frequently include knowledge of professional organizations that support children.
3. 152 participants (25.3%) reported sometimes including knowledge of professional organizations that support children.
4. 32 participants (5.3%) reported rarely teaching knowledge of professional organizations that support children.
5. 1 participant (0.17%) reported never including knowledge of professional organizations that support children.

Figures 2-12 revealed that teacher educators reported higher frequencies of inclusion of advocacy skills when the skill included knowledge of the profession. Advocacy skills that included the political process, public policies and communication with legislative representatives were less frequently included in early childhood course content.

The second part of the analysis of advocacy skills involved determining the overall mean for each item to identify those items most frequently and least frequently included in advocacy training in preprofessional early childhood courses. Table 8 shows the mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*) for each advocacy skill in the questionnaire with one indicating the highest level of advocacy skill inclusion and four the lowest level of inclusion of advocacy skills. The minimum (Min) and maximum (Max) rating is listed for each skill. The data in Table 8 revealed that teacher educators include understanding the professional role most frequently. Communicating with legislative representatives had the highest mean (2.63) indicating that this skill is included the least in the preparation of preservice professionals.

Table 8

Overall Means for Inclusion of Each Advocacy Skill Reported by Early Childhood Educators

Item	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Min	Max
Effective communication skills	598	1.20	.46	1	4
Development of interpersonal skills	595	1.32	.56	1	4
Understanding of the professional role	601	1.15	.37	1	3
Knowledge of current issues and events that affect children, families and the profession	601	1.22	.44	1	3
Knowledge of the conditions of children and families in society	600	1.31	.52	1	4
Public Policy affecting children, families and programs	599	1.75	1.02	1	4
Code of ethics as it relates to advocacy	595	1.80	.83	1	4
Definition of advocacy and advocate	595	1.95	.83	1	4
Knowledge of the political process	597	2.39	.82	1	4
How to communicate with legislative representatives	598	2.63	.89	1	4
Knowledge of professional organizations that support children	600	1.37	.59	1	4

Note. Means were calculated by averaging all responses for each item. A score of one is frequently include and four is never include.

The third part of the analysis of advocacy skills involved determining the overall mean of advocacy skills for two-year and four-year institutions. Table 9 reports the mean (*M*) and the standard deviation (*SD*) for each skill with the minimum (Min) and

maximum (Max) rating given for each skill. Means were calculated by averaging the scores for each skill for each type of institution. One indicates a high frequency of inclusion of advocacy skills and four represents the lowest levels of advocacy inclusion. The data in Table 9 show that teacher educators in the two types of institutions reveal few differences in the inclusion of advocacy skills.

Table 9

Mean of Advocacy Skills for Two-Year and Four-Year Institutions

Institution	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Min	Max
Two-year	193	1.63	.38	1.0	2.82
Four-year	378	1.65	.42	1.0	3.55

Note. Mean of advocacy skill was determined by averaging the first 11 items in question five of the teacher educator questionnaire by institution.

Advocacy strategies. The advocacy activities or strategies reported in the literature include the following:

- Advocacy issue debates
- Advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences
- Position papers on policy issues
- Joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession
- Volunteer activities to support children and families
- Donations to groups that support children and families
- Writing letters to the editor in support of children and families

- Letters/phone calls/visits to representatives
- Utilize the internet for legislative updates/information on child issues

The following chart essay (Figures 13-21) allowed for closer examination of the responses for individual items in the process of assessing the extent of the inclusion of advocacy strategies in current teaching practices in undergraduate programs. Information from each item was presented using the following format: 1) item is restated, 2) percent of responses are graphically presented, and 3) notes provide a narrative explanation and/or limitations (Chauvin, 1998; Haensly, Lupkowski & McNamara, 1987). Each item analysis was presented separately to more carefully document the use of advocacy strategies in two-year and four-year institutions.

Strategy #1

Advocacy issue debates

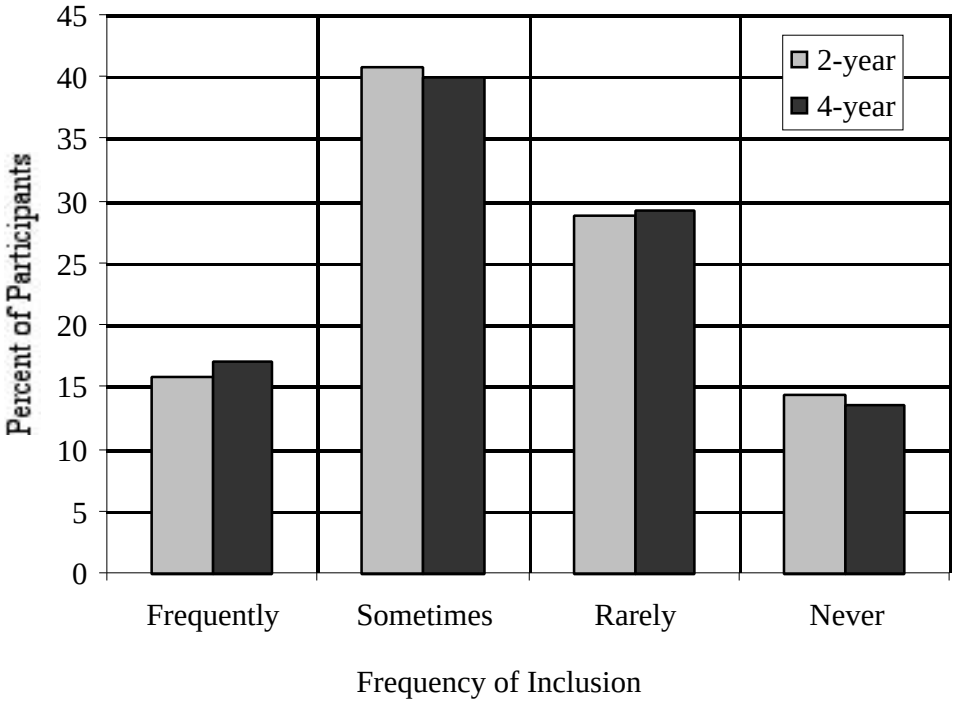

Figure 13. Distribution of responses for Strategy #1.

Notes:

1. 10 responses (1.7%) were missing data.
2. 100 participants (16.8%) frequently include advocacy issue debates.
3. 240 participants (40.2%) reported sometimes including advocacy issue debates.
4. 174 participants (29.1%) reported rarely using advocacy issue debates.
5. 83 participants (14%) reported never including advocacy issue debates.

Strategy #2

Advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences

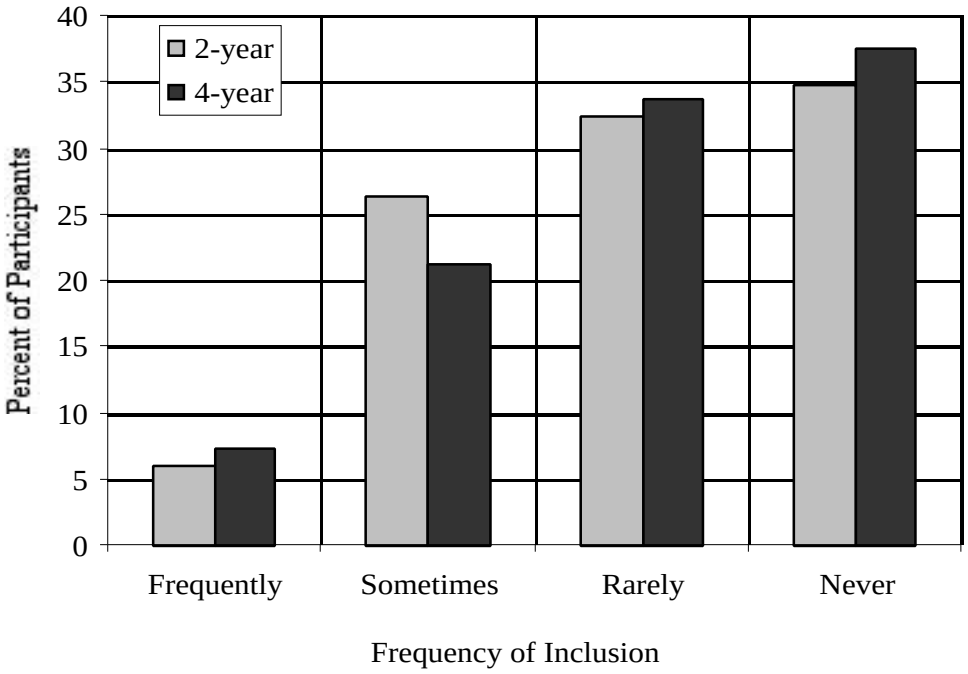

Figure 14. Distribution of responses for Strategy #2.

Notes:

1. 10 responses (1.7%) were missing data.
2. 41 participants (6.9%) frequently include advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences.
3. 137 participants (23%) reported sometimes including advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences.
4. 200 participants (33.5%) reported rarely using advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences.
5. 219 participants (36.7%) reported never including advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences.

Strategy #3

Position papers on policy issues

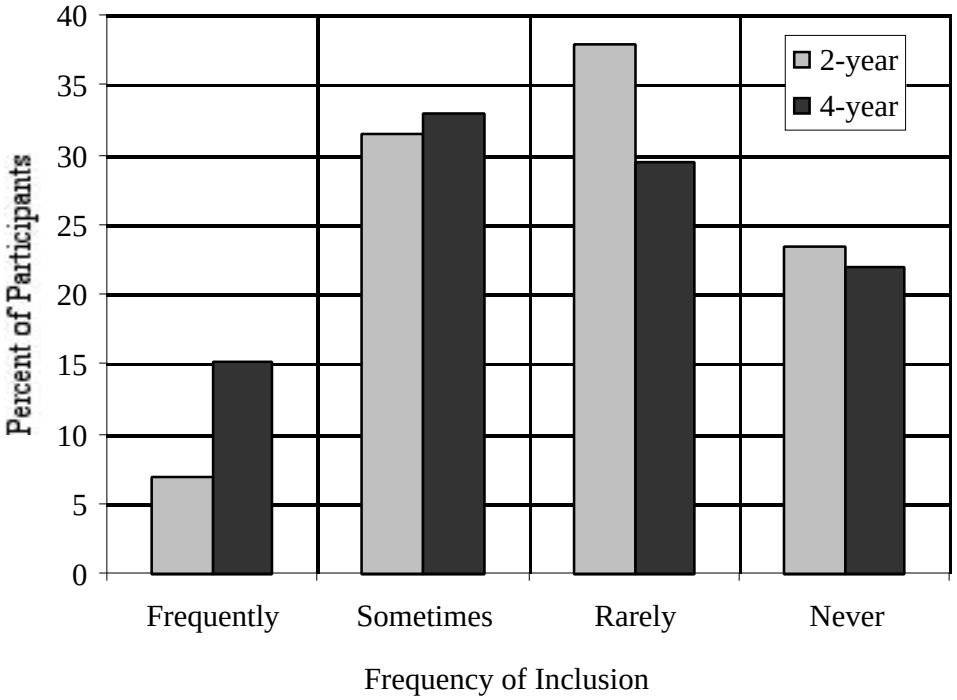

Figure 15. Distribution of responses for Strategy #3.

Notes:

1. 12 responses (2.%) were missing data.
2. 74 participants (12.4%) frequently include position papers on policy issues.
3. 194 participants (32.6%) reported sometimes including position papers on policy issues.
4. 193 participants (32.4%) reported rarely using position papers on policy issues.
5. 134 participants (22.5%) reported never including position papers on policy issues.

Strategy #4

Joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession

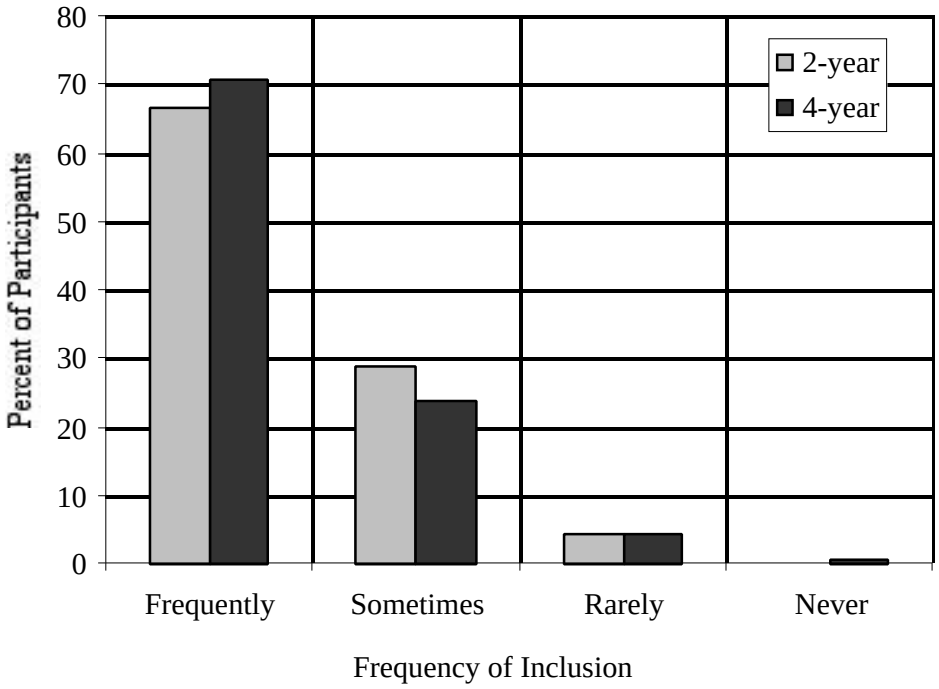

Figure 16. Distribution of responses for Strategy #4.

Notes:

1. 6 responses (1.0%) were missing data.
2. 417 participants (69.4%) frequently include joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession.
3. 154 participants (25.6%) reported sometimes including joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession.
4. 27 participants (4.5%) reported rarely using joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession.
5. 3 participants (0.50%) reported never including joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession.

Strategy #5

Volunteer activities to support children and families

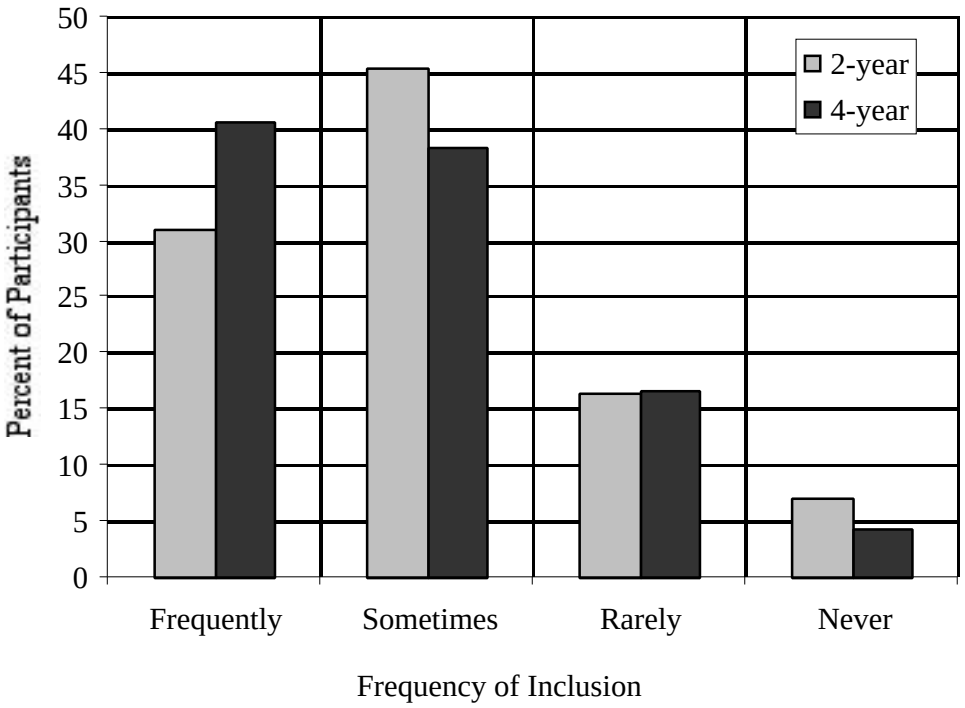

Figure 17. Distribution of responses for Strategy #5.

Notes:

1. 9 responses (1.5%) were missing data.
2. 224 participants (37.5%) frequently include volunteer activities to support children and families.
3. 244 participants (40.8%) reported sometimes including volunteer activities to support children and families.
4. 99 participants (16.6%) reported rarely using volunteer activities to support children and families.
5. 31 participants (5.2%) reported never including volunteer activities to support children and families.

Strategy #6

Donations to groups that support children and families

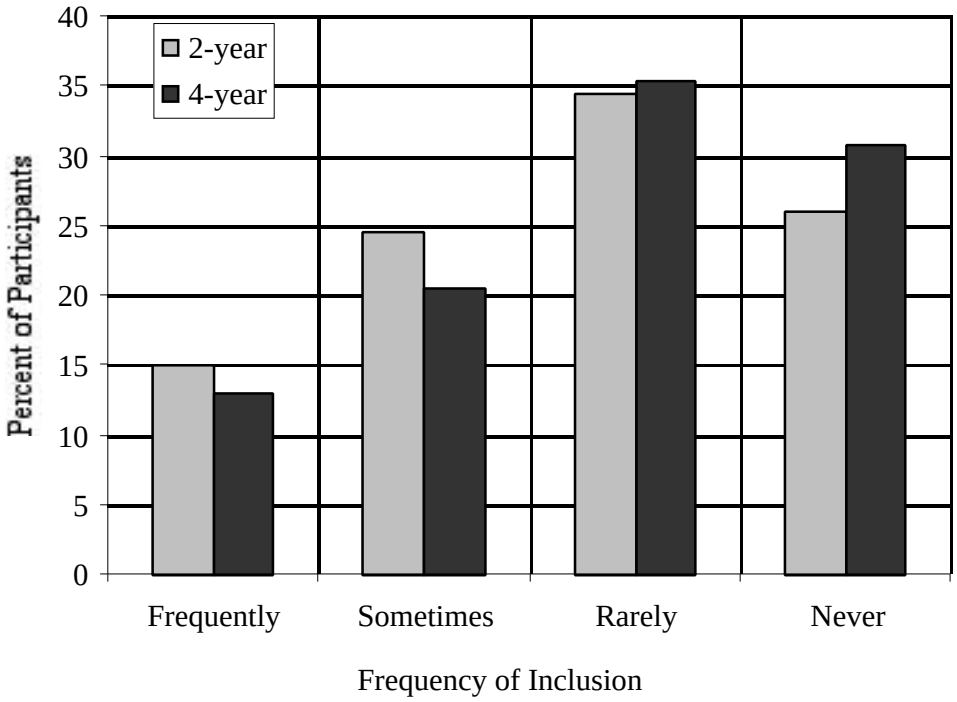

Figure 18. Distribution of responses for Strategy #6.

Notes:

1. 9 responses (1.5%) were missing data.
2. 134 participants (22.4%) frequently include donations to groups that support children and families.
3. 131 participants (21.9%) reported sometimes including donations to groups that support children and families.
4. 210 participants (35.1%) reported rarely using donations to groups that support children and families.
5. 175 participants (29.3%) reported never including donations to groups that support children and families.

Strategy #7

Writing letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families

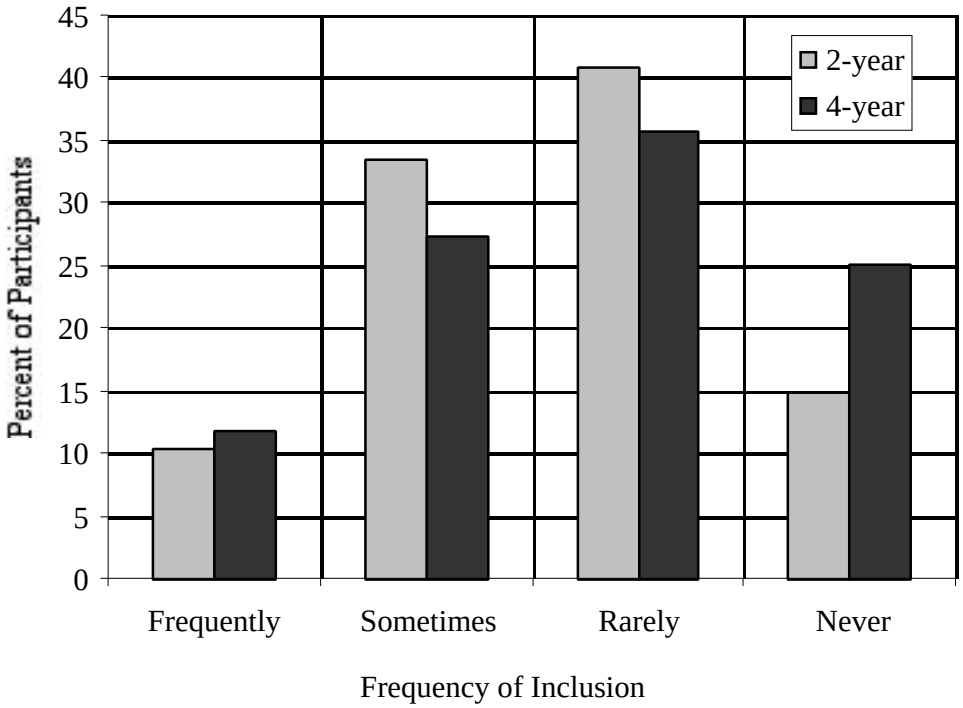

Figure 19. Distribution of responses for Strategy #7.

Notes:

1. 9 responses (1.5%) were missing data.
2. 68 participants (11.4%) frequently include writing letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families.
3. 176 participants (29.4%) reported sometimes including writing letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families.
4. 224 participants (37.5%) reported rarely using writing letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families.
5. 130 participants (21.7%) reported never including writing letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families.

Strategy #8

Letters/phone calls/visits to legislators/policy makers

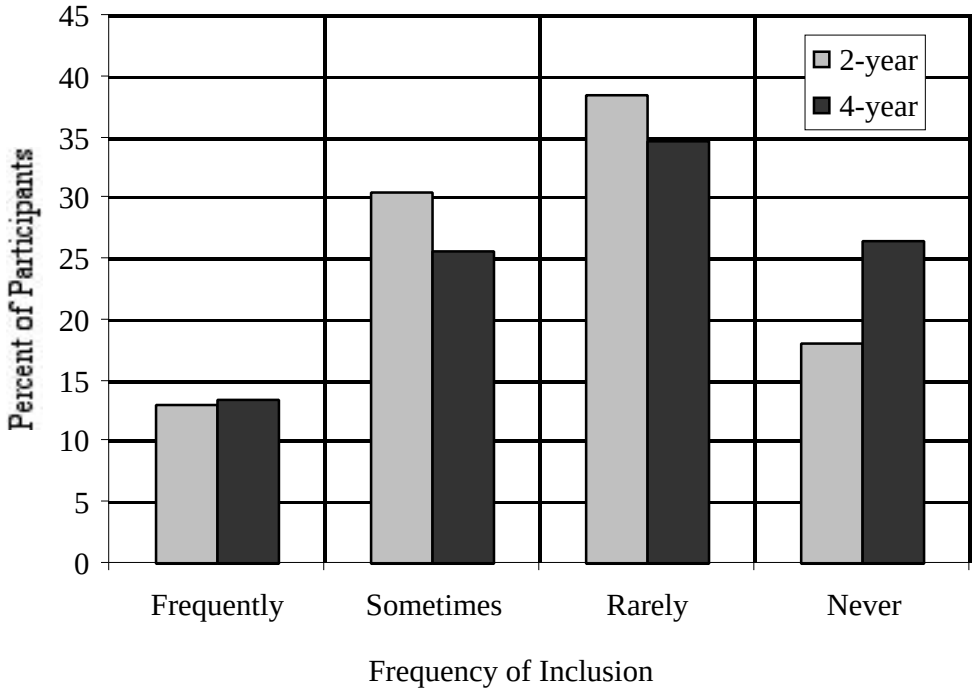

Figure 20. Distribution of responses for Strategy #8.

Notes:

1. 10 responses (1.6%) were missing data.
2. 79 participants (13.2%) frequently include letters/phone calls/visits to legislators/policy makers.
3. 163 participants (27.3%) reported sometimes including letters/phone calls/visits to legislators/policy makers.
4. 214 participants (35.8%) reported rarely using letters/phone calls/visits to legislators/policy makers.
5. 141 participants (23.6%) reported never including letters/phone calls/visits to legislators/policy makers.

Strategy #9

Use the Internet for legislative updates/information on child issues

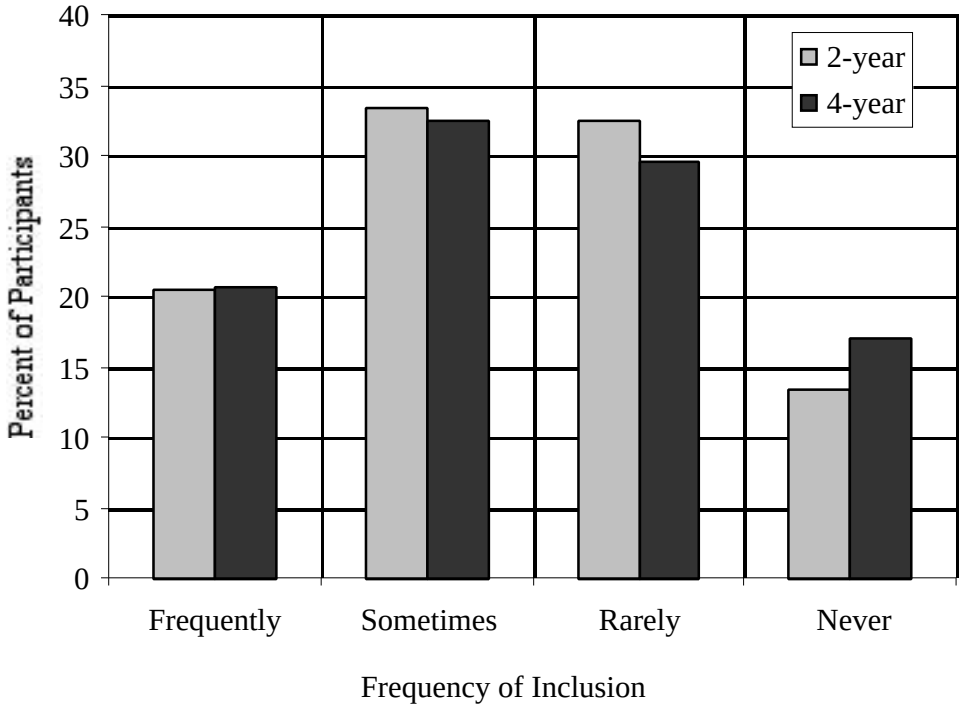

Figure 21. Distribution of responses for Strategy #9.

Notes:

1. 10 responses (1.6%) were missing data.
2. 123 participants (20.6%) reported frequently using the Internet for legislative updates/information on child issues.
3. 196 participants (32.8%) reported sometimes using the Internet for legislative updates/information on child issues.
4. 183 participants (30.7%) reported rarely using the Internet for legislative updates/information on child issues.
5. 95 participants (16%) reported never using the Internet for legislative updates/information on child issues.

Figures 13-21 revealed a variety of responses to the selected advocacy strategies for teaching advocacy to preprofessionals. Teacher educators most frequently (69%) included the strategy of joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession. Writing letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families was the advocacy strategy used the least (22%) by teacher educators.

The second part of the analysis of advocacy strategies involved determining the overall mean for each item to identify those items most frequently and least frequently included in advocacy training in preprofessional early childhood courses. Table 10 shows the mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*) for each advocacy strategy in the questionnaire with one being the highest score and four the lowest. The minimum (Min) and maximum (Max) rating is listed for each strategy. The information in Table 10 showed that teacher educators are most likely to encourage students to join professional organizations and least likely to include the strategy of advocacy journals or logs in advocacy instruction.

Table 10

Overall Mean for each Strategy Included in Advocacy Training by Early Childhood Educators

Item	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Min	Max
Advocacy issue debates	597	2.4	.92	1	4
Advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences	597	3.0	.93	1	4
Position papers on policy issues	595	2.65	.96	1	4
Joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession	601	1.36	.59	1	4
Volunteer activities to support children and families	598	1.89	.86	1	4
Donations to groups that support children and families	598	2.80	1.01	1	4
Writing letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families	598	2.70	.94	1	4
Letters/phone/calls/ visits to legislators/polity makers	597	2.70	.97	1	4
Utilize internet for legislative updates/information on child issues	597	2.42	.99	1	4

Note. Means were calculated by averaging all responses for each item. A score of one indicates very important and four is not very important.

The third part of the analysis of advocacy strategies involved determining the overall mean of advocacy strategies for two-year and four-year institutions. Teacher educators in the two types of institutions reveal few differences in the inclusion of advocacy strategies. Table 11 reports the mean (*M*) and the standard deviation (*SD*) for

each strategy with the minimum (Min) and maximum (Max) rating given for each skill. Means were calculated by averaging the scores for each skill for each type of institution.

Table 11

Mean of Advocacy Strategies for Two-Year and Four-Year Institutions

Institution	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Min	Max
Two-year	199	2.42	.59	1.0	3.89
Four-year	387	2.44	.62	1.0	3.89

Note. Mean of advocacy strategies was determined by averaging the last nine items in question five of the teacher educator questionnaire by institution.

Analysis of Research Question Three

What are the reasons for including or not including advocacy training in preservice courses?

The third problem was to identify and rank the reasons teacher educators include or do not include advocacy training in the preparation of preservice teacher educators. In Part 3 of the teacher educator questionnaire, participants ranked six stated reasons for including advocacy information and or advocacy instruction in their courses. Number one was the most important and number six was the least important. This was a forced choice item and participants were asked to rank each item. Not all participants ranked all items. Table 12 shows the ranking of each reason identified in the questionnaire by teacher educators for including advocacy in their courses. The data reveal that both groups ranked the same item as the most important reason for including advocacy information

and/or instruction in early childhood preparation courses: important for children and families.

Table 12

Mean Response for Including Advocacy Information/Instruction in the Courses Taught by Early Childhood Educators

Reason	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Importance to profession			
2-year	196	2.56	1.26
4-year	384	2.86	1.31
TOTAL	580	2.76	1.30
Required by code of ethics			
2-year	188	4.47	1.07
4-year	371	4.49	1.02
TOTAL	559	4.49	1.04
Required by institution			
2-year	183	5.70	.92
4-year	356	5.67	.95
TOTAL	539	5.68	.94
Professional responsibility			
2-year	198	2.53	1.08
4-year	389	2.43	1.03
TOTAL	587	2.47	1.05
Moral responsibility			
2-year	191	3.19	1.29
4-year	384	2.86	1.38
TOTAL	575	2.97	1.36
Important for children/families			
2-year	197	1.86	1.15
4-year	390	1.85	1.12
TOTAL	587	1.86	1.13

Note. Means were calculated by averaging all responses for each item.

Part 3 of the teacher educator questionnaire also asked participants to respond to two items: 1) I do not include advocacy in my early childhood preparation courses I teach because…, or 2) I do not include as much advocacy as I would like in my early childhood preparation courses I teach because… This was a forced choice item. Participants ranked the seven stated reasons for including advocacy information and or instruction in their courses. Number one was the most important and number seven was the least important reason for not including advocacy. Not all participants ranked all items. Some participants reported that the choices given did not accurately reflect their reasons for not including as much advocacy in their courses as they would like. Other participants reported including as much advocacy as they wanted in their courses. It is important to note that teacher educators reported that they are limited by time and the amount of required content knowledge in their assigned courses. Table 13 shows the ranking of each reason identified in the questionnaire by teacher educators for not including advocacy (or as much advocacy as they would like) in their courses. The data revealed that both groups viewed time limitations, too much required content in the course, and the overwhelming nature of responsibilities of early childhood professionals when entering the profession as the most important reasons for not including advocacy information/instruction in early childhood preparation courses.

Table 13

Mean Response for Not Including Advocacy Information/Instruction in the Courses Taught by Early Childhood Educators

Reason	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Time limitations			
2-year	179	2.19	1.32
4-year	330	1.90	1.25
TOTAL	509	2.00	1.28
Overwhelming nature			
2-year	169	3.30	1.55
4-year	288	3.53	1.52
TOTAL	457	3.45	1.54
Too much required			
2-year	178	2.47	1.43
4-year	309	2.33	1.31
TOTAL	487	2.38	1.36
Not critical component			
2-year	160	5.67	1.32
4-year	270	5.98	1.26
TOTAL	430	5.86	1.29
Maturity of students			
2-year	170	3.99	1.66
4-year	281	4.24	1.77
TOTAL	451	4.15	1.73
Other content more important			
2-year	167	3.84	1.55
4-year	281	4.15	1.57
TOTAL	448	4.04	1.57
Not required for certification			
2-year	160	5.94	1.55
4-year	272	5.37	1.79
TOTAL	432	5.56	1.72

Analysis of Research Question Four

What do preservice teacher educators see as priorities in the advocacy training of early childhood professionals?

The fourth research problem was to identify the importance of selected advocacy topics and skills in the preparation of preservice early childhood professionals. In Part 4 of the questionnaire, participants were asked to respond to the same set of advocacy skills presented in Part 2 of the questionnaire. Participants reported their beliefs about the importance of inclusion of each advocacy skill identified in the literature using a Likert scale (i.e. *Very Important*-1, *Somewhat Important*-2, *Not Very Important*-3, *Not at all Important*-4). The data for research question four is presented in three sections: importance of advocacy skills, importance of advocacy strategies and importance of advocacy topics. Each section will contain the following components: chart essays depicting the percentages of participants selecting each Likert rating; a table showing the means of each advocacy skill or activity; and a table showing the means by institution.

Importance of advocacy skills. Participants rated the importance of the advocacy skills identified in the literature and listed in Table 8.

The following chart essay (Figures 22-32) allowed for a closer examination of the responses assessing beliefs about the importance of specific advocacy skills in undergraduate early childhood programs. Information from each item was presented using the following format: 1) item is restated, 2) percent of responses are graphically presented, and 3) a notes section provides narrative explanations and/or limitations

(Chauvin, 1998; Haensly, Lupkowski & McNamara, 1987). Each item analysis was presented separately to more carefully document the importance of advocacy skills in two-year and four-year institutions.

Importance Skill #1

Effective communication skills

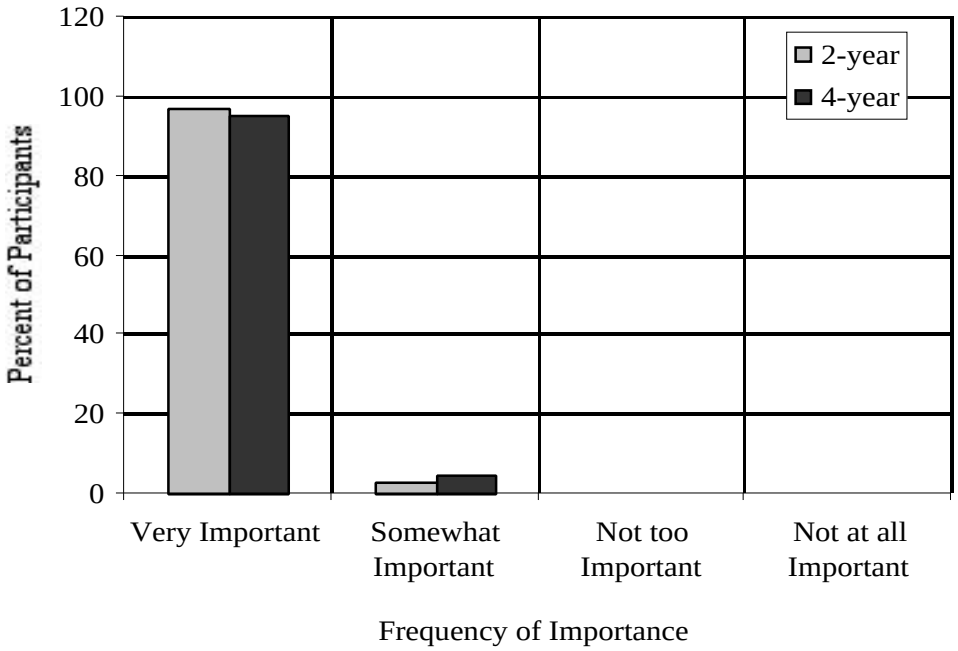

Figure 22. Distribution of responses for Importance Skill #1.

Notes:

1. 10 responses (1.65%) were missing data.
2. 572 participants (95.8%) rated effective communication skills very important.
3. 25 participants (30.7%) evaluated effective communication skills somewhat important.
4. Zero participants ranked effective communication skills not too important.
5. Zero participants rated effective communication skills not at all important.

Importance Skill #2

Development of interpersonal skills

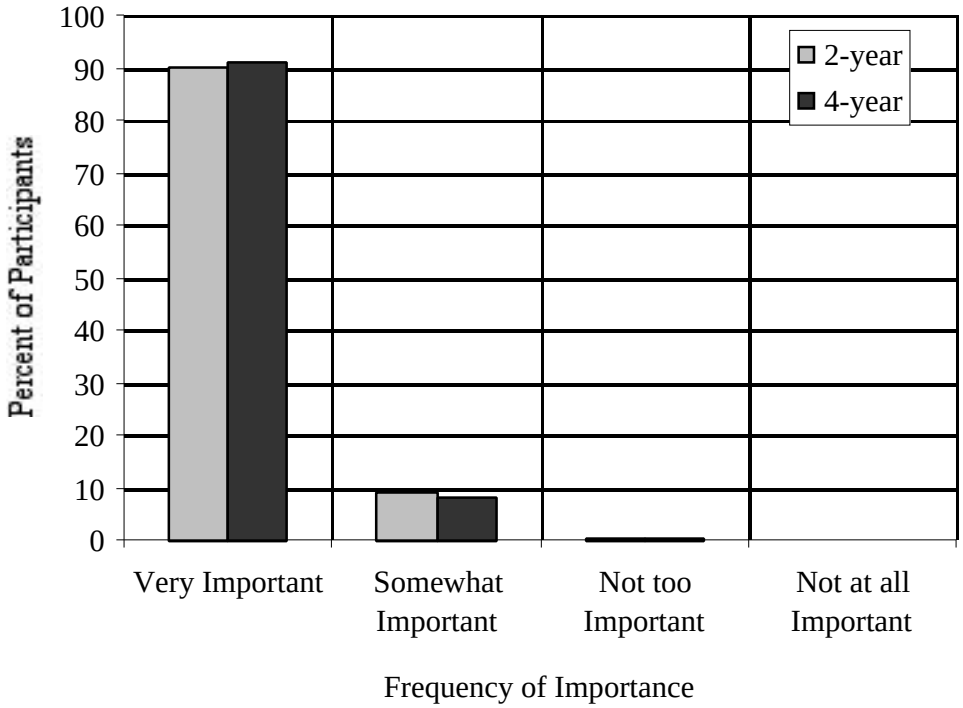

Figure 23. Distribution of responses for Importance Skill #2.

Notes:

1. 11 responses (1.8%) were missing data.
2. 542 participants (90.9%) rated development of interpersonal skills very important.
3. 52 participants (8.7%) evaluated development of interpersonal skills somewhat important.
4. 2 participants (0.34%) ranked development of interpersonal skills not too important.
5. Zero participants rated development of interpersonal skills not at all important.

Importance Skill #3

Understanding of the professional role

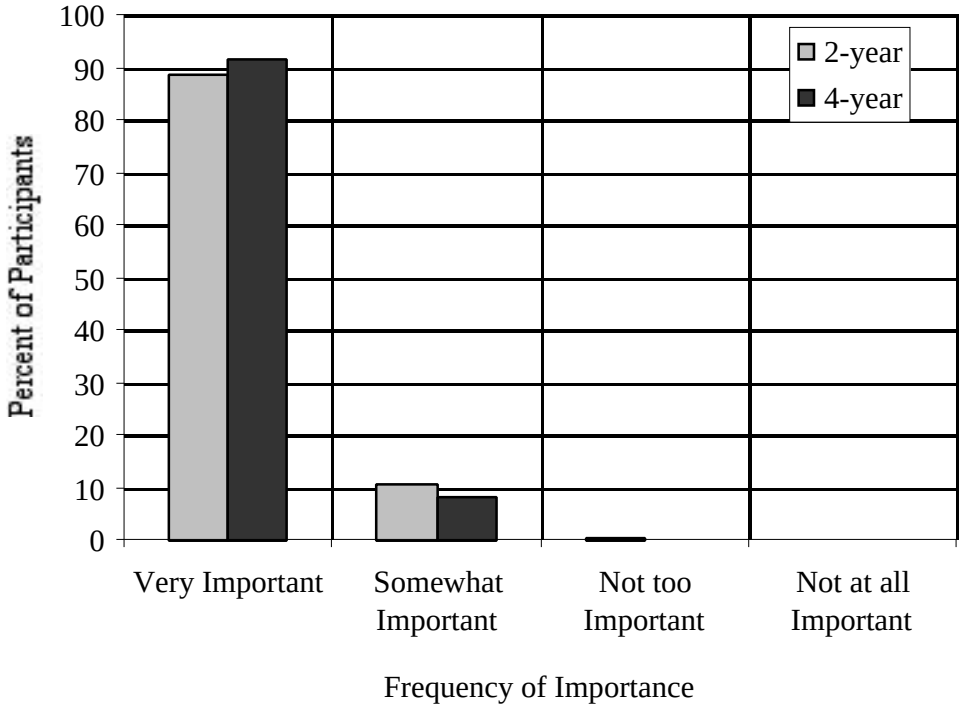

Figure 24. Distribution of responses for Importance Skill #3.

Notes:

1. 10 responses (1.7%) were missing data.
2. 541 participants (90.6%) rated understanding of the professional role very important.
3. 55 participant (9.2%) evaluated understanding of the professional role somewhat important.
4. 1 participants (.51%) ranked understanding of the professional role not too important.
5. No participants rated understanding of the professional role not at all important.

Importance Skill #4

Knowledge of current issues and events that affect children, families and the profession

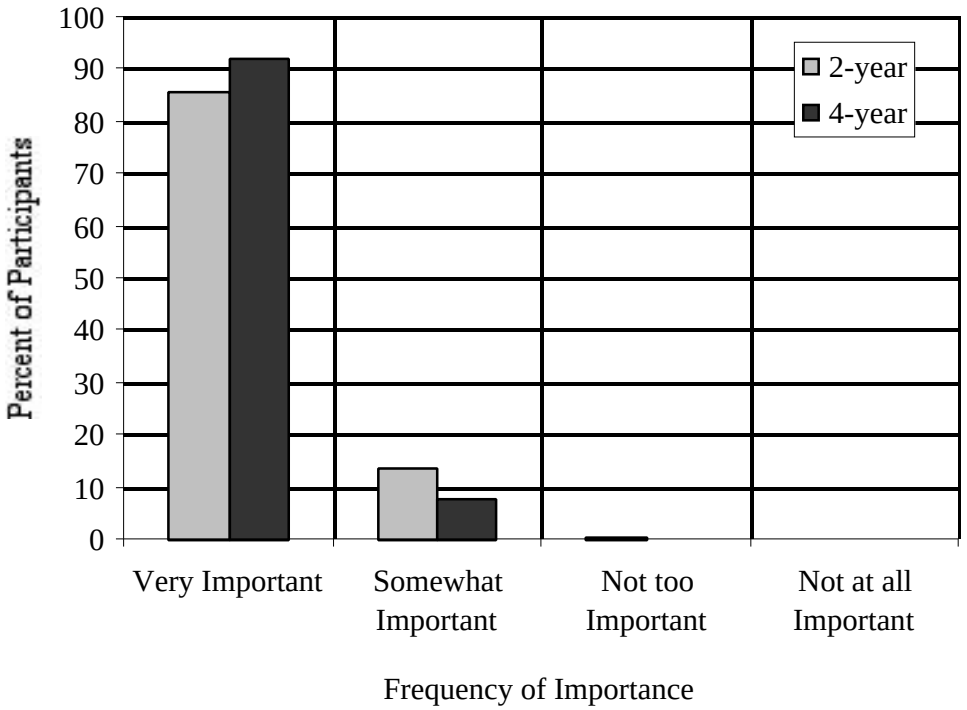

Figure 25. Distribution of responses for Importance Skill #4.

Notes:

1. 10 responses (1.7%) were missing data.
2. 537 participants (89.9%) rated knowledge of current issues and events that affect children, families and the profession very important.
3. 86 participants (14.4%) evaluated knowledge of current issues and events that affect children, families and the profession somewhat important.
4. 1 participants (0.51%) ranked knowledge of current issues and events that affect children, families and the profession not too important.
5. No participants rated knowledge of current issues and events that affect children, families and the profession not at all important.

Importance Skill #5

Knowledge of the conditions of children and families in society

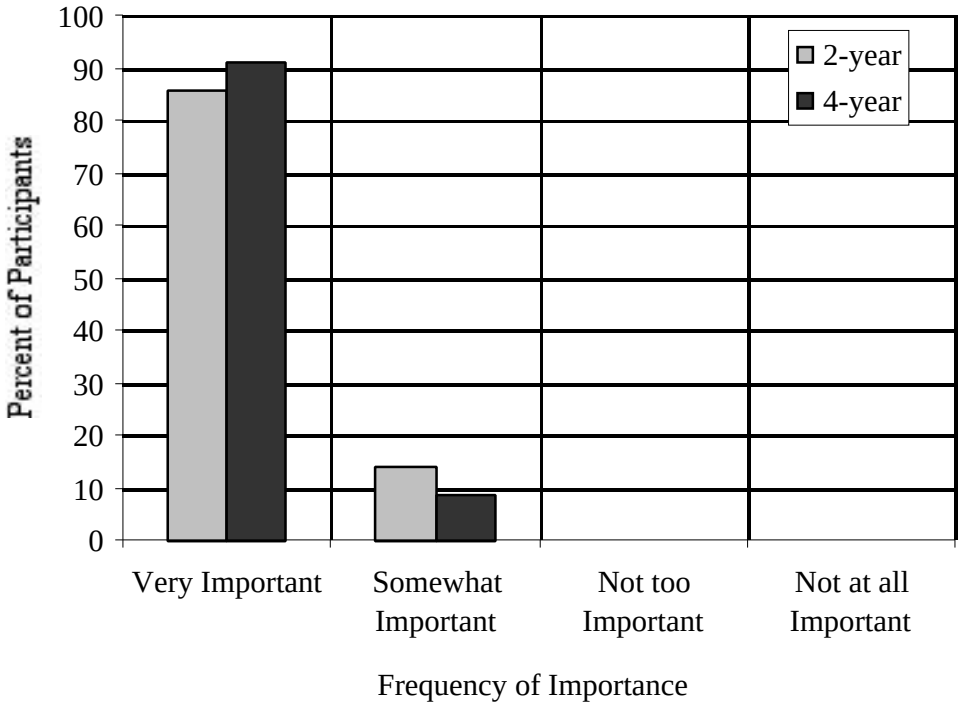

Figure 26. Distribution of responses for Importance Skill #5.

Notes:

1. 11 responses (1.8%) were missing data.
2. 533 participants (89.4%) rated knowledge of the conditions of children and families in society very important.
3. 63 participants (10.6%) evaluated knowledge of the conditions of children and families in society somewhat important.
4. Zero participants ranked knowledge of the conditions of children and families in society not too important.
5. No participants rated knowledge of the conditions of children and families in society not at all important.

Importance Skill #6

Public policy affecting children, families and programs

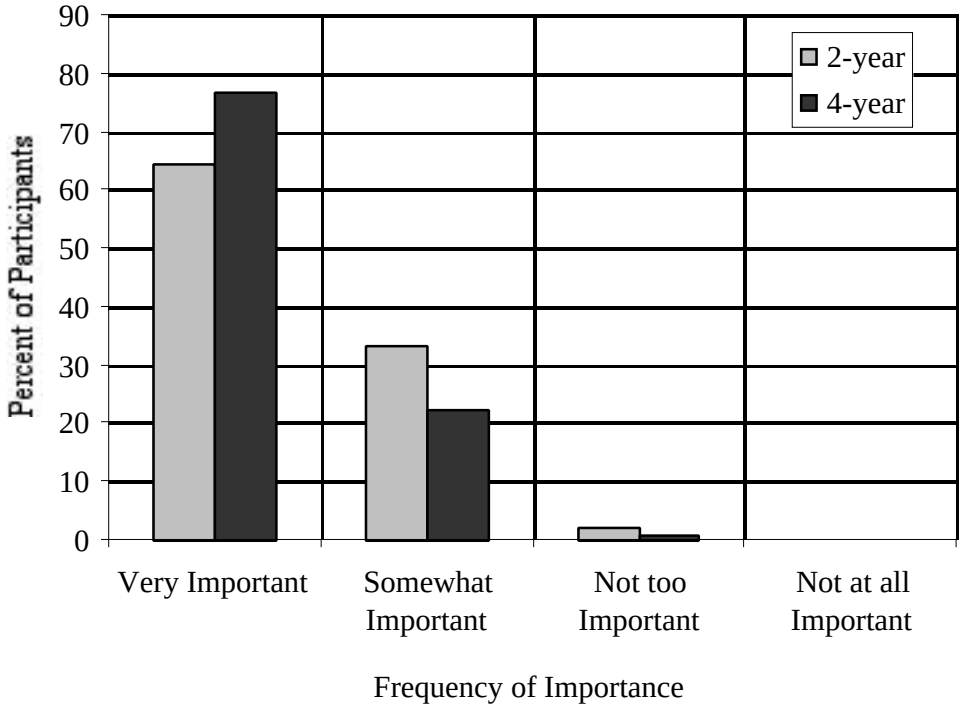

Figure 27. Distribution of responses for Importance Skill #6.

Notes:

1. 15 responses (24.7%) were missing data.
2. 430 participants (72.6%) rated public policy affecting children, families and programs very important.
3. 154 participants (26.0%) evaluated public policy affecting children, families and programs somewhat important.
4. 4 participants (0.68%) ranked public policy affecting children, families and programs not too important.
5. No participants rated public policy affecting children, families and programs not at all important.

Importance Skill #7

Code of ethics as it relates to advocacy

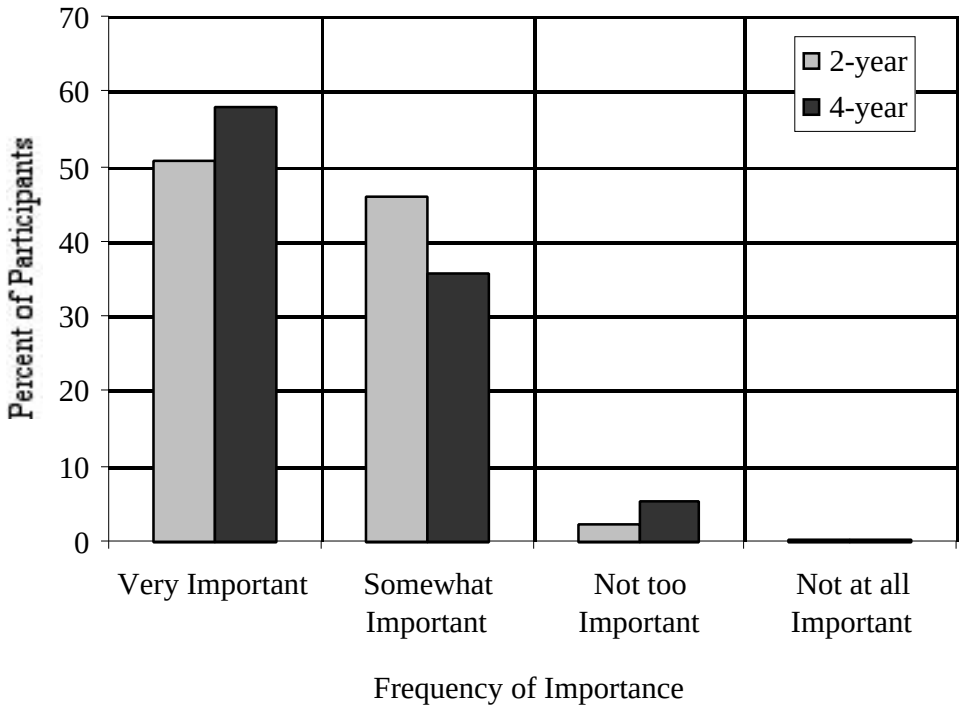

Figure 28. Distribution of responses for Importance Skill #7.

Notes:

1. 15 responses (24.7%) were missing data.
2. 330 participants (55.76%) rated code of ethics as it relates to advocacy very important.
3. 233 participants (39.4%) evaluated code of ethics as it relates to advocacy somewhat important.
4. 26 participants (44.0%) ranked code of ethics as it relates to advocacy not too important.
5. 3 participants (0.51%) rated code of ethics as it relates to advocacy not at all important.

Importance Skill #8

Definition of advocacy and advocate

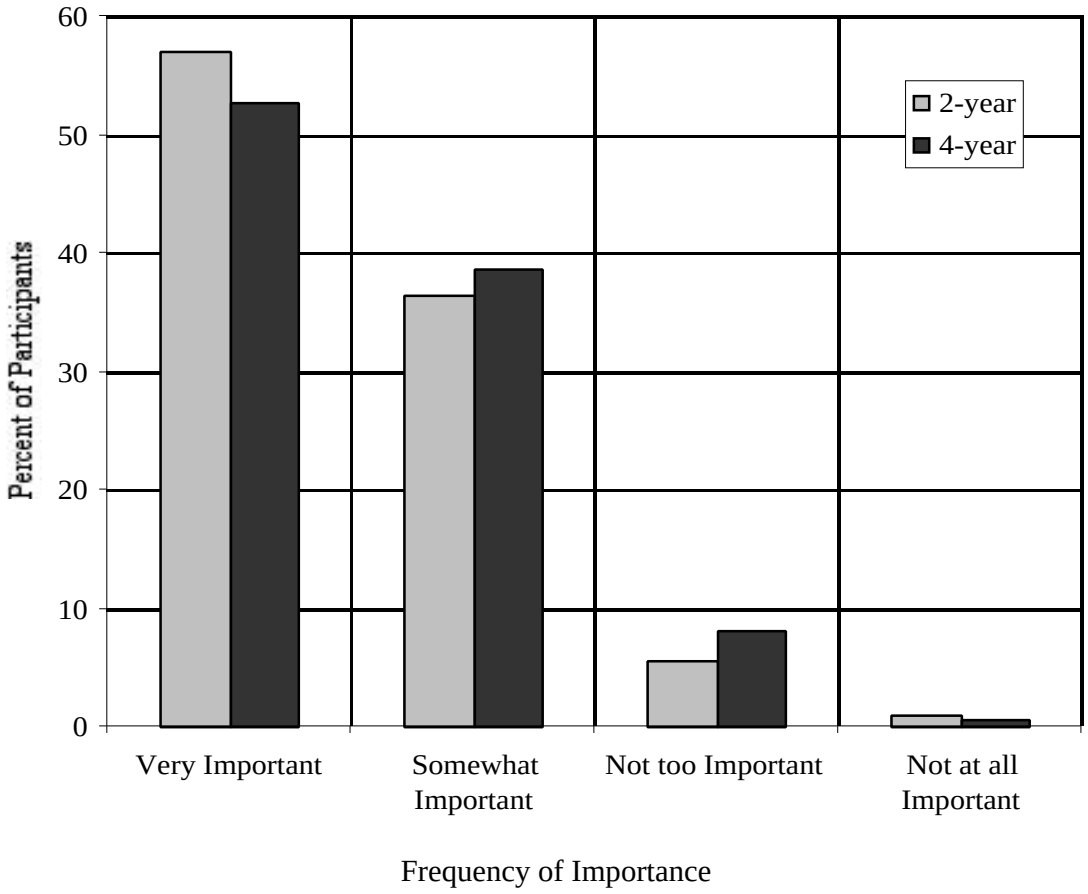

Figure 29. Distribution of responses for Importance Skill #8.

Notes:

1. 14 responses (23.0%) were missing data.
2. 321 participants (54.1%) rated definition of advocacy and advocate very important.
3. 225 participants (37.9%) evaluated definition of advocacy and advocate somewhat important.
4. 43 participants (7.3%) ranked definition of advocacy and advocate not too important.
5. 3 participants (0.67%) rated definition of advocacy and advocate not at all important.

Importance Skill #9

Knowledge of the political process

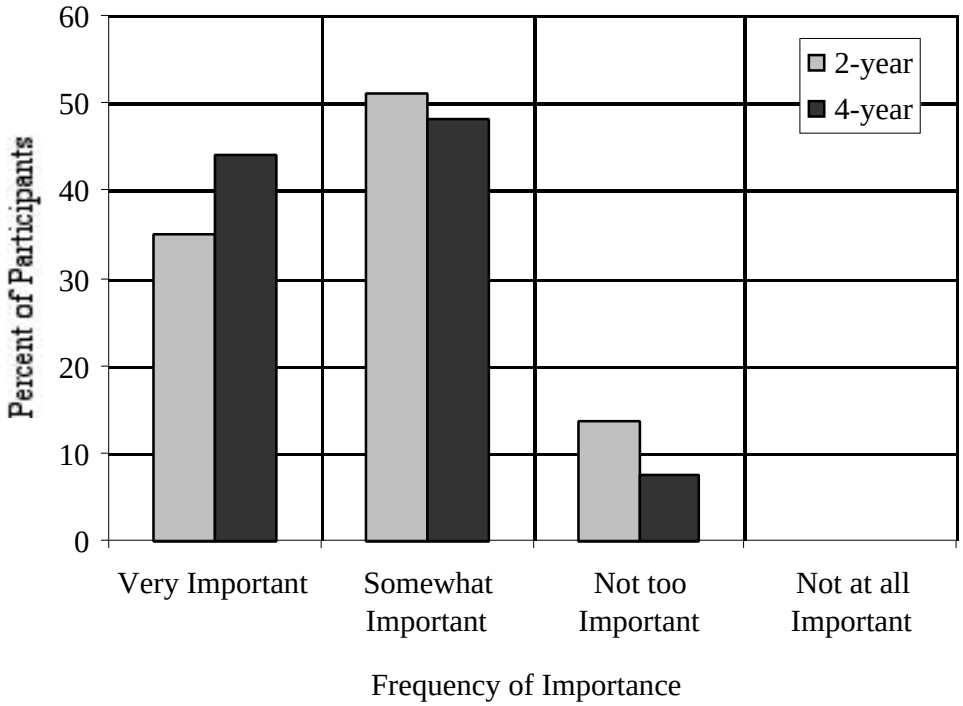

Figure 30. Distribution of responses for Importance Skill #9.

Notes:

1. 11 responses (1.8%) were missing data.
2. 245 participants (41.1%) rated knowledge of the political process very important.
3. 294 participants (49.3%) evaluated knowledge of the political process somewhat important.
4. 57 participants (9.6%) ranked knowledge of the political process not too important.
5. No participants rated knowledge of the political process not at all important.

Importance Skill #10

How to communicate with legislative representatives

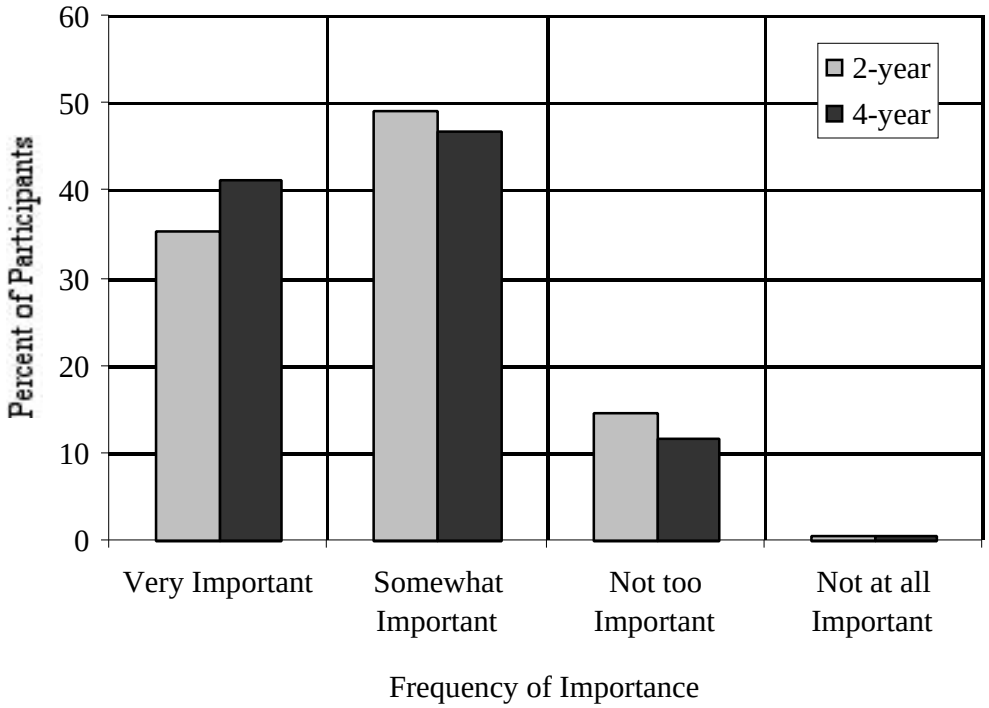

Figure 31. Distribution of responses for Importance Skill #10.

Notes:

1. 14 responses (2.3%) were missing data.
2. 233 participants (39.3%) rated how to communicate with legislative representatives very important.
3. 282 participants (47.6%) evaluated how to communicate with legislative representatives somewhat important.
4. 75 participants (12.6%) ranked how to communicate with legislative representatives not too important.
5. 3 participants (0.51%) rated how to communicate with legislative representatives not at all important.

Importance Skill #11

Knowledge of professional organizations that support children

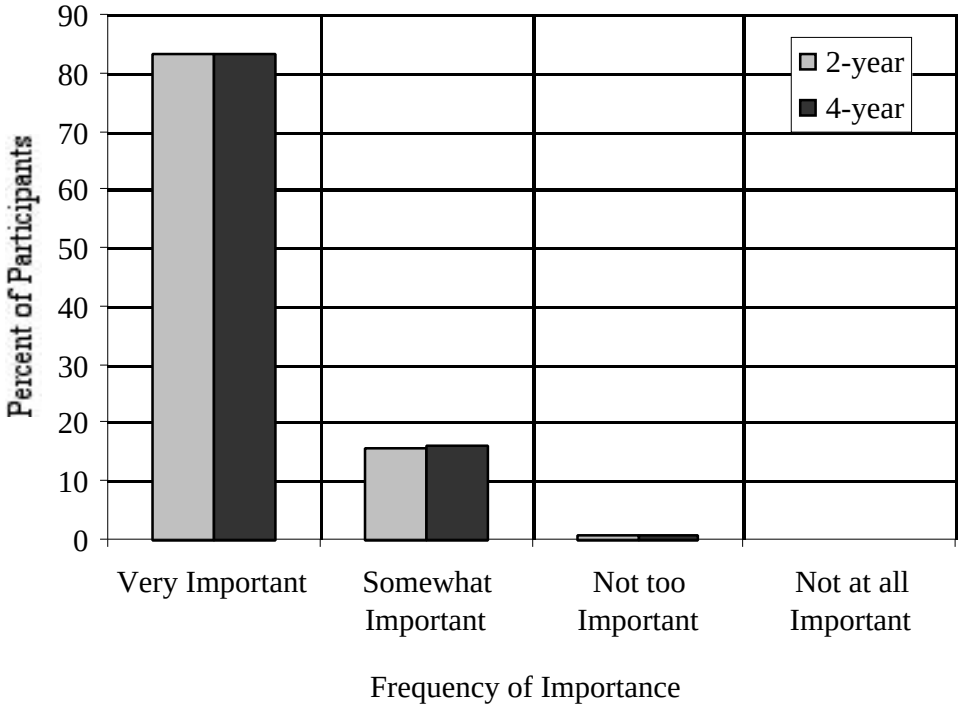

Figure 32. Distribution of responses for Importance Skill #11.

Notes:

1. 11 responses (1.8%) were missing data.
2. 496 participants (83.2%) rated knowledge of professional organizations that support children very important.
3. 95 participants (15.9%) evaluated knowledge of professional organizations that support children somewhat important.
4. 5 participants (0.84%) ranked knowledge of professional organizations that support children not too important.
5. No participants rated knowledge of professional organizations that support children not at all important.

The chart essay Figures 22-32 revealed that teacher educators believe that preparing early childhood professionals who possess effective communication skills, interpersonal skills and who understand the professional role is much more important than preparing professionals who understand the political process and know how to communicate with legislative representatives. Consistent with the ratings for inclusion of advocacy skills in course content, skills that included the political process, public policies and communication with legislative representatives were less frequently rated very important by the teacher educators who participated in the study.

The second part of the analysis of advocacy skills involved determining the overall mean for each item to identify those items considered most important and least important for inclusion in advocacy training in preprofessional early childhood courses. Table 14 shows the mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*) for importance of each advocacy skill in the questionnaire with one indicating the highest level of importance and four the lowest level of importance of advocacy skills. The minimum (Min) and maximum (Max) rating is listed for each skill. The data in Table 14 revealed that teacher educators rated the items related to understanding the professional role most important with effective communication skills receiving the highest importance score. The items related specifically to advocacy received the least important ratings. Communicating with legislative representatives had the highest mean indicating that this skill was rated the least important in the preparation of preservice professionals. Although only four items received the rating of not at all important, the data reveal that skills related to public policy advocacy are not considered as important in the preparation of early childhood

professionals as skills focused on other professional roles of early childhood professionals.

Table 14

Overall Means for Importance of Each Advocacy Skill Reported by Early Childhood Educators

Item	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Min	Max
Effective communication skills	597	1.04	.20	1	2
Development of interpersonal skills	596	1.09	.30	1	3
Understanding of the professional role	597	1.10	.30	1	3
Knowledge of current issues and events that affect children, families, and the profession	597	1.10	.31	1	3
Knowledge of the conditions of children and families in society	596	1.11	.31	1	2
Public policy affecting children, families, and programs	592	1.29	.48	1	3
Code of ethics as it relates to advocacy	592	1.50	.61	1	4
Definition advocacy and advocate	593	1.54	.66	1	4
Knowledge of the political process	596	1.68	.64	1	3
How to communicate with legislative representatives	593	1.74	.69	1	4
Knowledge professional organizations that support children	596	1.18	.40	1	3

Note. Mean was calculated by averaging all responses for each item. A score of one is very important and four is not at all important.

The third part of the analysis of question four involved determining the overall mean of the importance of advocacy skills for two-year and four-year institutions. Table 15 reports the mean (*M*) and the standard deviation (*SD*) for each skill with the minimum (Min) and maximum (Max) rating given for each skill. Means were calculated by averaging the scores for each skill for each type of institution. One indicates a high importance, while four represents the low level of importance of advocacy skills. The data in Table 15 show that teacher educators in the two types of institutions reveal few differences in ratings of importance of selected advocacy skills.

Table 15

Mean of Importance of Advocacy Skills for Two-Year and Four-Year Institutions

Institution	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Min	Max
Two-year	194	1.34	.28	1.0	2.55
Four-year	383	1.29	.25	1.0	2.18

Note. Means were determined by averaging the first 11 items in question nine of the teacher educator questionnaire by institution.

Importance of advocacy strategies. Participants rated the importance of the advocacy strategies identified in the literature and listed in Table 10.

The following chart essays (Figures 33-41) allowed for closer examination of the responses for individual items in the process of assessing the importance of advocacy strategies in current teaching practices in undergraduate programs. Information from each item was presented using the following format: 1) item is restated, 2) percent of

responses are graphically presented, and 3) a notes section provides narrative explanations and/or limitations (Haensly, Lupkowski & McNamara, 1987). Each item analysis was presented separately to more carefully document the importance of advocacy strategies in two-year and four-year institutions.

Importance Strategy #1

Advocacy issue debates

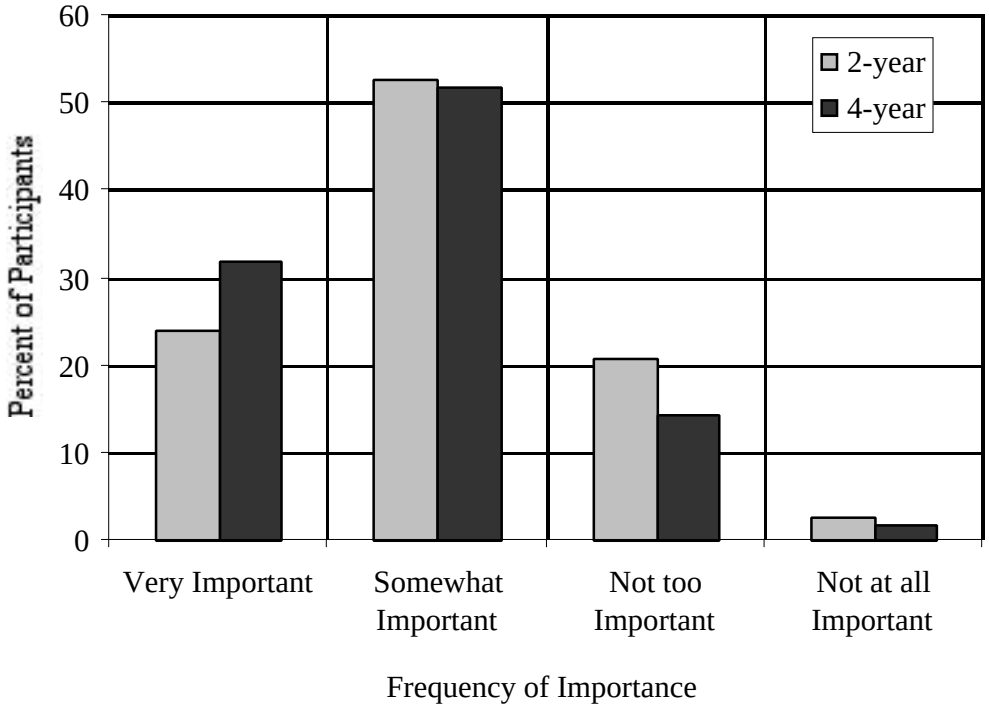

Figure 33. Distribution of responses for Importance Strategy #1.

Notes:

1. 15 responses (2.5%) were missing data.
2. 173 participants (29.2%) rated advocacy issue debates very important.
3. 309 participants (52.2%) evaluated advocacy issue debates somewhat important.
4. 98 participants (16.6%) ranked advocacy issue debates not too important.
5. 12 participants (2.0%) rated advocacy issue debates not at all important.

Importance Strategy #2

Advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences

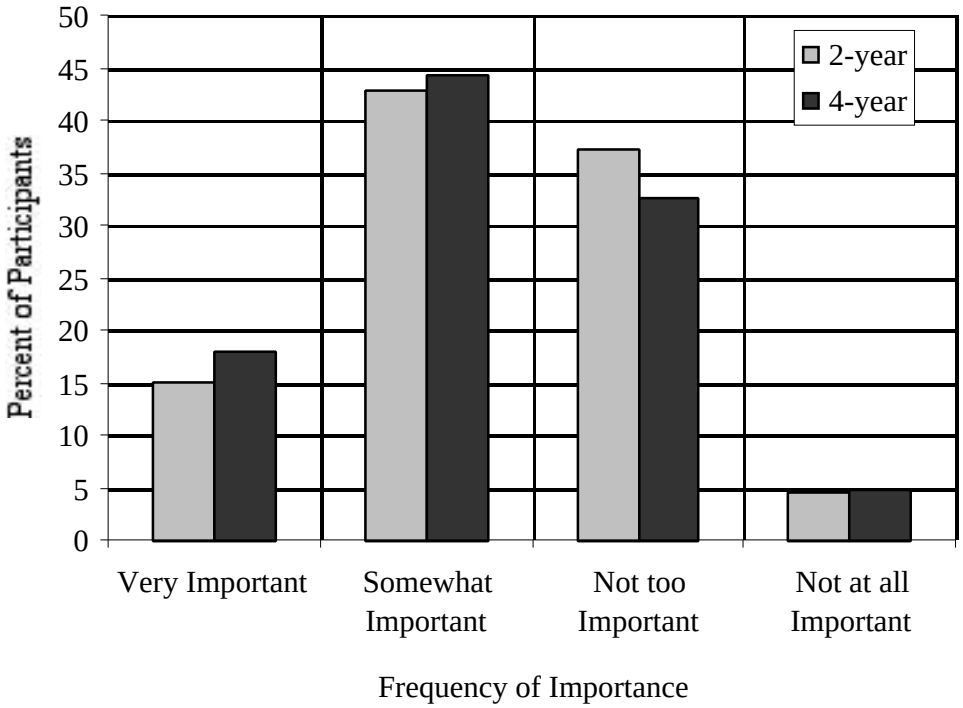

Figure 34. Distribution of responses for Importance Strategy #2.

Notes:

1. 13 responses (2.1%) were missing data.
2. 102 participants (17.1%) rated advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences very important.
3. 261 participants (43.9%) evaluated advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences somewhat important.
4. 203 participants (34.2%) ranked advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences not too important.
5. 28 participants (4.7%) rated advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences not at all important.

Importance Strategy #3

Position papers on policy issues

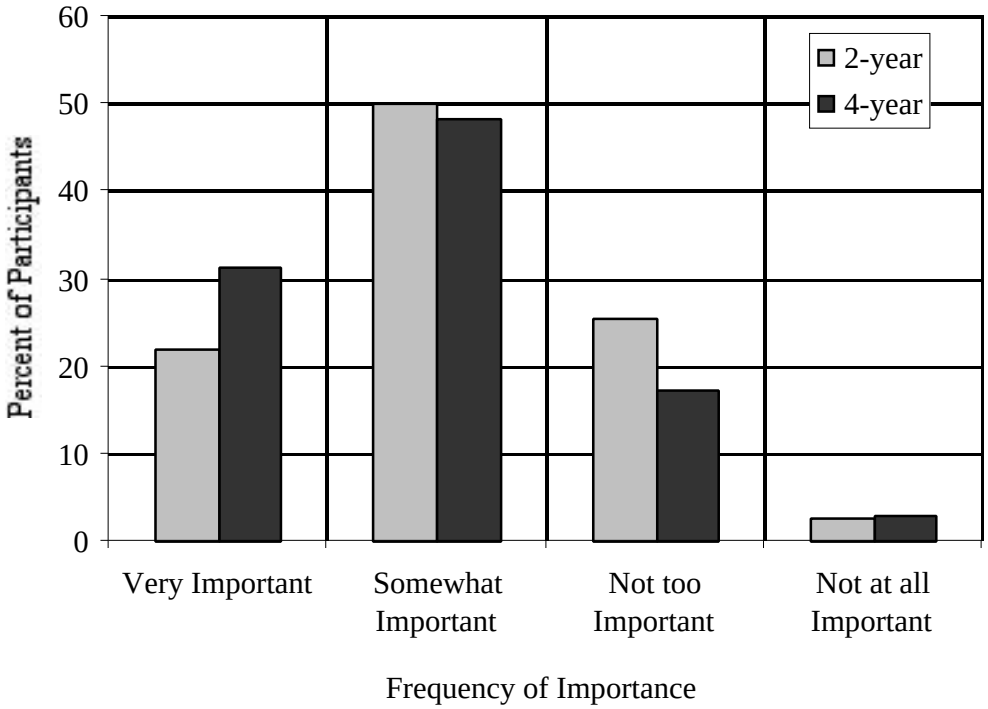

Figure 35. Distribution of responses for Importance Strategy #3.

Notes:

1. 16 responses (2.6%) were missing data.
2. 167 participants (28.3%) rated position papers on policy issues very important.
3. 289 participants (48.9%) evaluated position papers on policy issues somewhat important.
4. 118 participants (20.0%) ranked position papers on policy issues not too important.
5. 17 participants (2.9%) rated position papers on policy issues not at all important.

Importance Strategy #4

Joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession

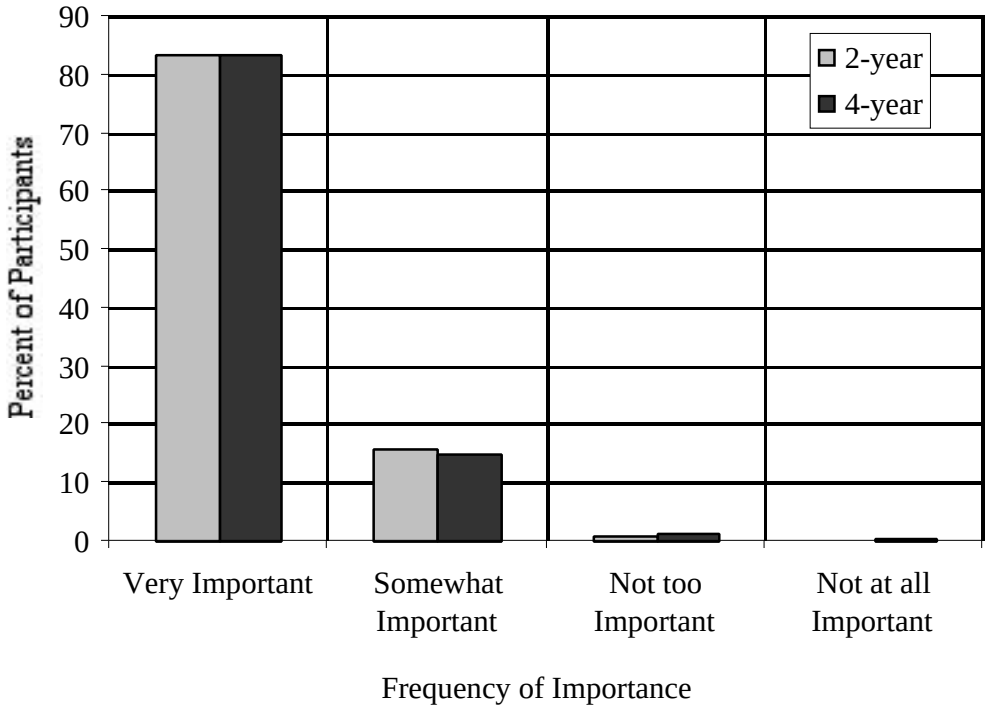

Figure 36. Distribution of responses for Importance Strategy #4.

Notes:

1. 11 responses (1.8%) were missing data.
2. 496 participants (83.2%) rated joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession very important.
3. 91 participants (15.3%) evaluated rated joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession somewhat important.
4. 7 participants (1.2%) ranked joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession not too important.
5. 2 participants (0.34%) rated joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession not at all important.

Importance Strategy #5

Volunteer activities to support children and families

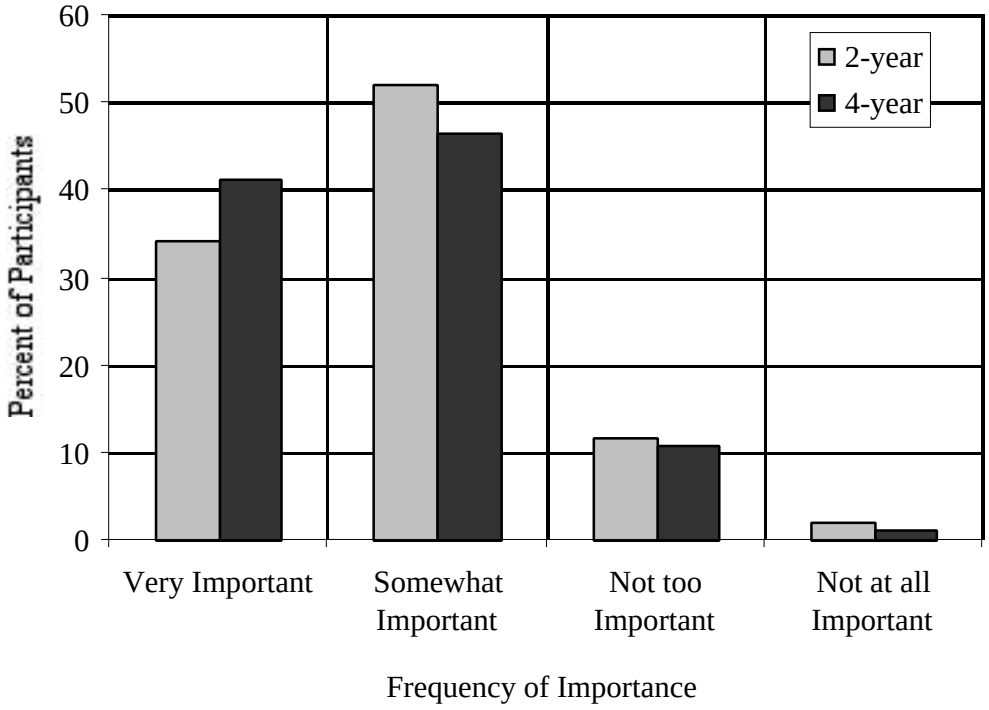

Figure 37. Distribution of responses for Importance Strategy #5.

Notes:

1. 14 responses (2.3%) were missing data.
2. 231 participants (39.0%) rated volunteer activities to support children and families very important.
3. 287 participants (48.4%) evaluated volunteer activities to support children and families somewhat important.
4. 66 participants (11.1%) ranked volunteer activities to support children and families not too important.
5. 9 participants (1.5%) rated volunteer activities to support children and families not at all important.

Importance Strategy #6

Donations to groups that support children and families

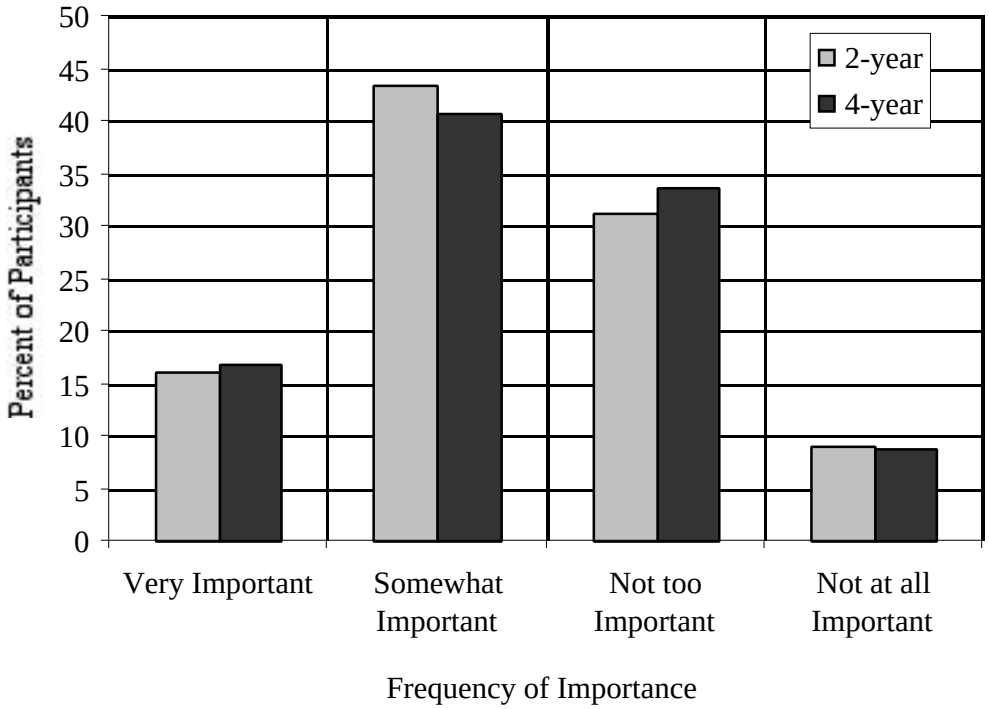

Figure 38. Distribution of responses for Importance Strategy #6.

Notes:

1. 13 responses (2.1%) were missing data.
2. 99 participants (16.7%) rated donations to groups that support children and families very important.
3. 247 participants (41.6%) evaluated donations to groups that support children and families somewhat important.
4. 195 participants (32.8%) ranked donations to groups that support children and families not too important.
5. 53 participants (8.9%) rated donations to groups that support children and families not at all important.

Importance Strategy #7

Writing letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families

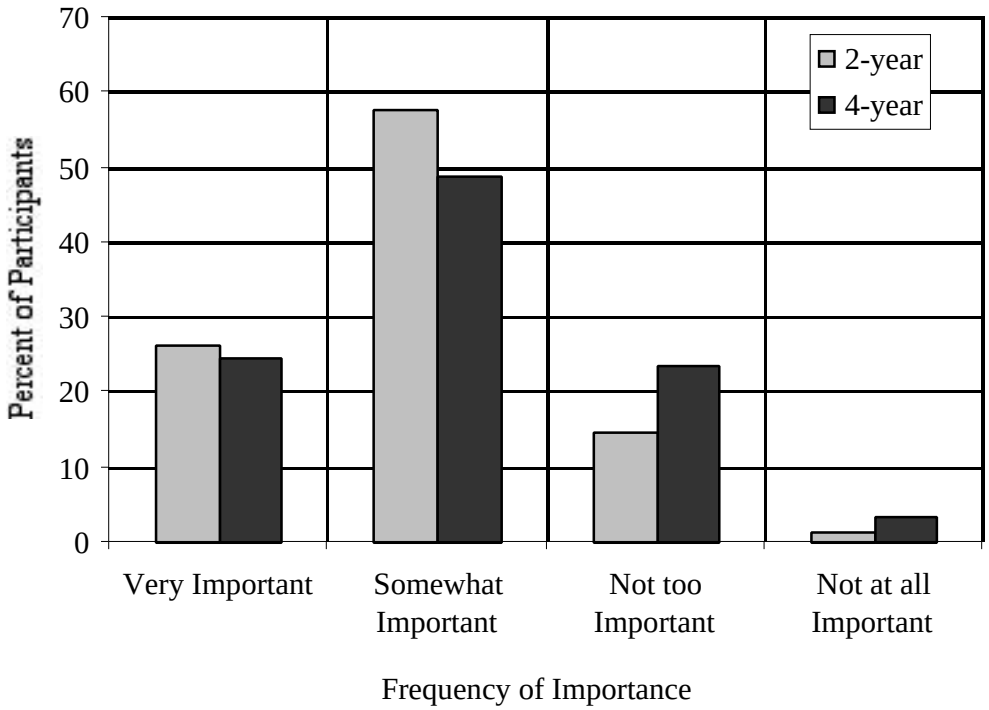

Figure 39. Distribution of responses for Importance Strategy #7.

Notes:

1. 11 responses (1.8%) were missing data.
2. 150 participants (25.2%) rated writing letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families very important.
3. 308 participants (51.7%) evaluated writing letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families somewhat important.
4. 122 participants (20.5%) ranked writing letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families not too important.
5. 16 participants (2.7%) rated writing letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families not at all important.

Importance Strategy #8

Letters/phone calls/visits to legislators/policy makers

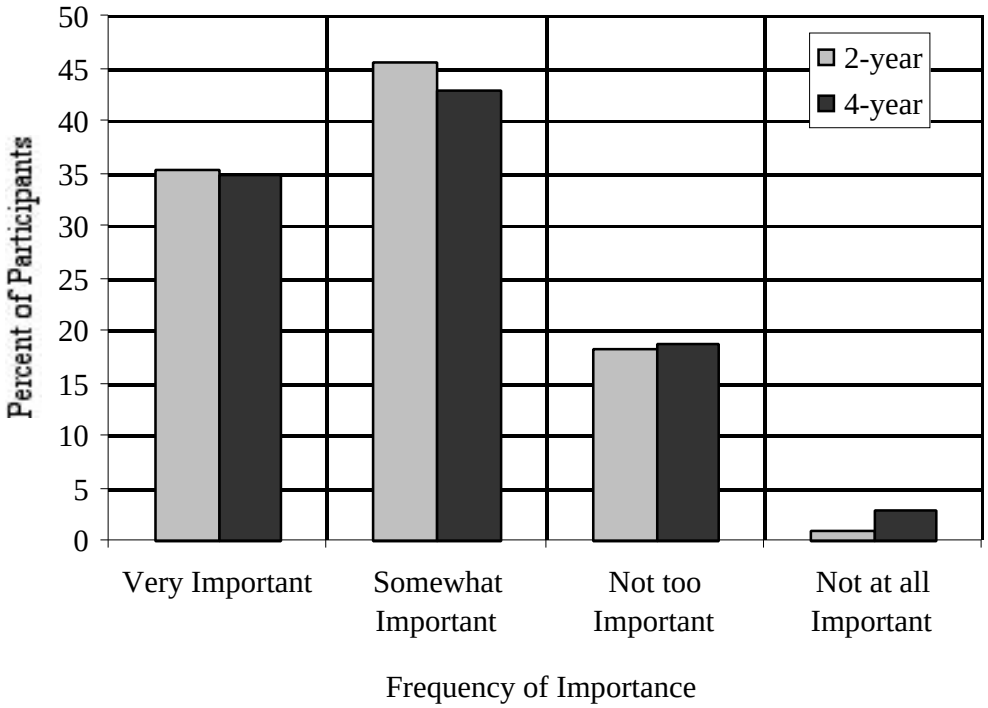

Figure 40. Distribution of responses for Importance Strategy #8.

Notes:

1. 12 responses (2.0%) were missing data.
2. 209 participants (35.1%) rated letters/phone calls/visits to legislators/policy makers very important.
3. 261 participants (43.9%) evaluated letters/phone calls/visits to legislators/policy makers somewhat important.
4. 111 participants (18.7%) ranked letters/phone calls/visits to legislators/policy makers not too important.
5. 14 participants (2.4%) rated letters/phone calls/visits to legislators/policy makers not at all important.

Importance Strategy #9

Use the Internet for legislative updates/information on child issues

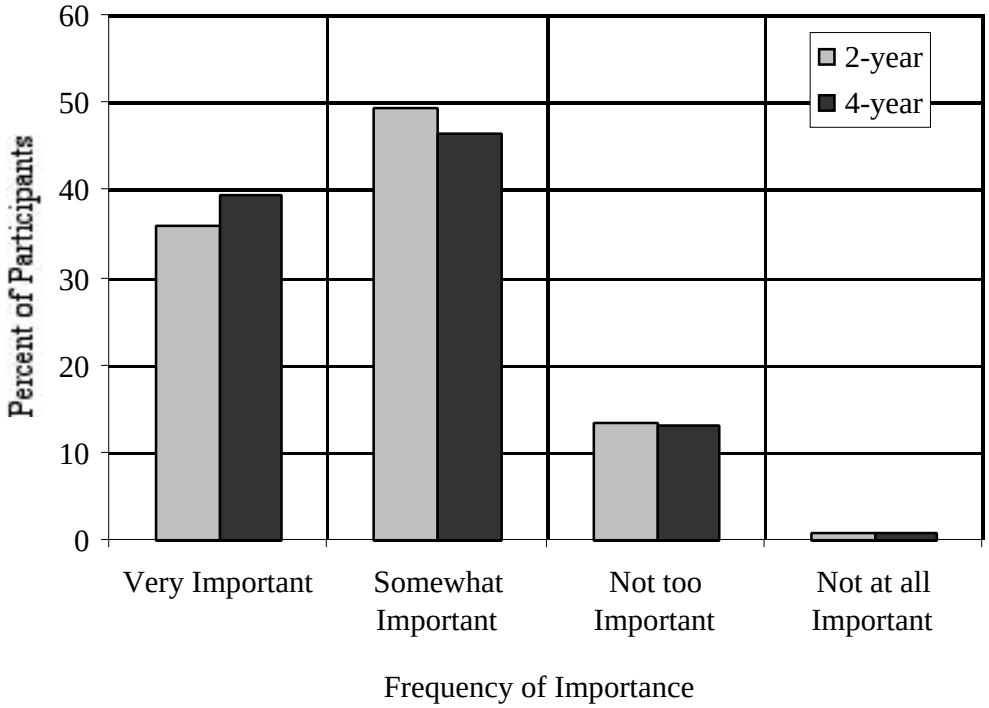

Figure 41. Distribution of responses for Importance Strategy #9.

Notes:

1. 11 responses (1.8%) were missing data.
2. 228 participants (38.3%) rated utilize the Internet for legislative updates/information on child issues very important.
3. 283 participants (47.5%) evaluated use the Internet for legislative updates/information on child issues somewhat important.
4. 80 participants (13.4%) ranked utilize the Internet for legislative updates/information on child issues not too important.
5. 5 participants (0.84%) rated use the Internet for legislative updates/information on child issues not at all important.

The chart essay Figures 33-41 showed more variety in the strategies teacher educators believe are important in preparing early childhood professionals. Every advocacy strategy listed received at least one rating of not at all important and most responses were clustered between the ratings of somewhat important and not too important. Almost 10% of the teacher educators believe that teaching early childhood preprofessionals about donations to groups that support children and families is not at all important in their preparation programs. Some commented that their students were on scholarships or had to put themselves through school and this strategy was not appropriate in their setting. Others stated that it is too much to ask of those professionals who will enter the child care job market making low wages. One participant replied that unless early childhood professionals begin to make donations and work for worthy wages we will not be able to attain worthy wages so we can make donations to support children and families.

The second part of the analysis of advocacy strategies involved determining the overall mean for each item to identify those strategies believed most important and least important in preparing early childhood preprofessionals. Table 16 shows the mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*) for importance of each advocacy strategy in the questionnaire with one indicating the highest level of importance and four the lowest level of importance of advocacy skills. The minimum (Min) and maximum (Max) rating is listed for each strategy. The data in Table 17 show that joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession was rated very important by more participants than any other strategy. The means indicate that overall the selected

advocacy strategies are considered only somewhat important in preparing early preprofessionals.

Table 16

Overall Mean for Importance of Each Strategy Included in Advocacy Training by Early Childhood Educators

Item	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Min	Max
Advocacy issue debates	592	1.91	.73	1	4
Advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences	594	2.26	.80	1	4
Position papers on policy issues	591	1.97	.77	1	4
Joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession	596	1.19	.44	1	4
Volunteer activities to support children and families	593	1.75	.70	1	4
Donations to groups that support children and families	594	2.34	.86	1	4
Writing letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families	596	2.00	.75	1	4
Letters/phone calls/visits to legislators/policy makers	595	1.88	.79	1	4
Utilize the Internet for legislative updates/information on child issues	596	1.77	.71	1	4

Note. Means were calculated by averaging all responses for each item. A score of one indicates very important and four is not very important.

The final part of the analysis of the importance of advocacy strategies involved determining the overall mean of importance of advocacy strategies for two-year and four-year institutions. Table 17 reports the mean (*M)* and the standard deviation (*SD*) for each strategy with the minimum (Min) and maximum (Max) rating given for each strategy. Means were calculated by averaging the scores for each skill for each type of institution. One indicates very important and four represents a rating of not too important. The data in Table 17 show that teacher educators in the two types of institutions reveal few differences in the inclusion of advocacy skills.

Table 17

Mean of Importance of Advocacy Strategies for Two-Year and Four-Year Institutions

Institution	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Min	Max
Two-year	194	1.91	.48	1.0	3.44
Four-year	388	1.89	.49	1.0	3.56

Note. Mean of importance of advocacy strategies was determined by averaging the last nine items in question nine of the teacher educator questionnaire by institution. A one is very important and four is not too important.

Knowledge of selected advocacy topics. In question ten of the teacher educator questionnaire, participants were asked to rate the importance of including selected advocacy topics in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals. Participants rated each item using the following scale:1-*Very Important*, 2-*Somewhat Important*, 3-*Not too*

Important and 4-*Not at all Important.* The following topics were identified in the literature as important information for early childhood professionals:

- Informed about public policies that impact children
- Informed about pending legislation that impacts children
- Informed about administrative policies that impact children
- Informed about administrative policies that impact children
- Informed about mandates that impact children and learning
- Informed about quality child care issues
- Informed about social services available for families
- Informed about resources for children and families in need

The following chart essays (Figures 42-48) allowed a closer examination of the responses for individual items in assessing the importance of selected advocacy topics in undergraduate programs. Information from each item was presented using the following format: 1) item is restated, 2) percent of responses are graphically presented, and 3) a notes section provides narrative explanations and/or limitations (Chauvin, 1998; Haensly, Lupkowski & McNamara, 1987). Each item analysis was presented separately to more carefully document the importance of inclusion of selected advocacy topics in two-year and four-year institutions.

Importance Topic #1

Public policies that impact children

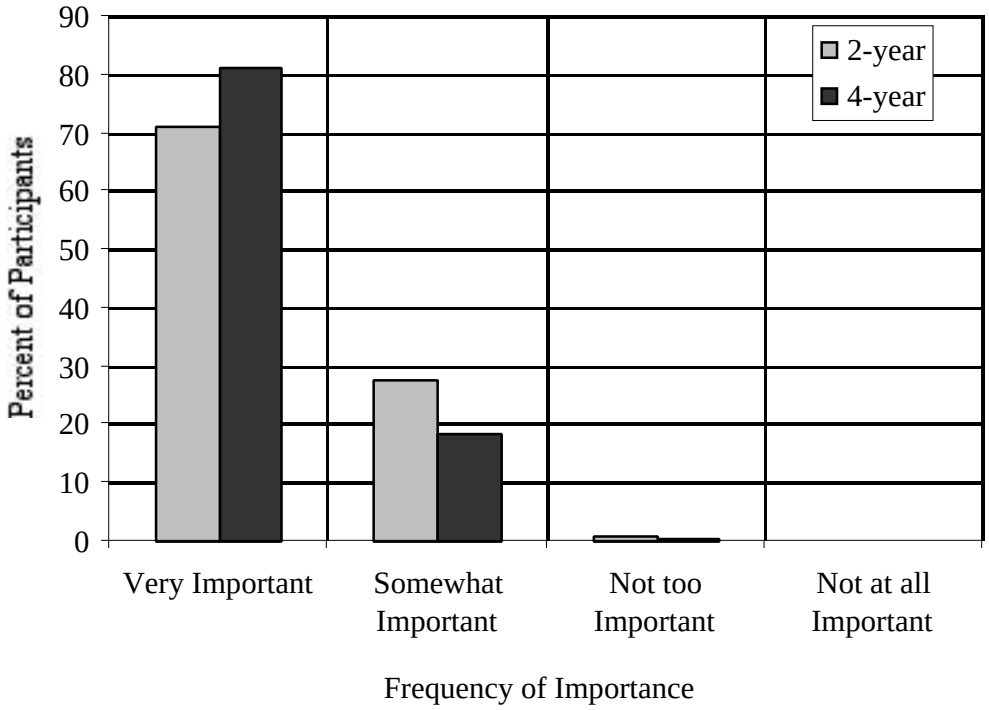

Figure 42. Distribution of responses for Importance Topic #1.

Notes:

1. 11 responses (1.8%) were missing data.
2. 464 participants (77.9%) rated knowledge of public policies that impact children very important.
3. 128 participants (21.5%) evaluated knowledge of public policies that impact children somewhat important.
4. 4 participants (0.67%) ranked knowledge of public policies that impact children not too important.
5. No participants (0.0%) rated knowledge of public policies that impact children not at all important.

Importance Topic #2

Pending legislation that impacts children

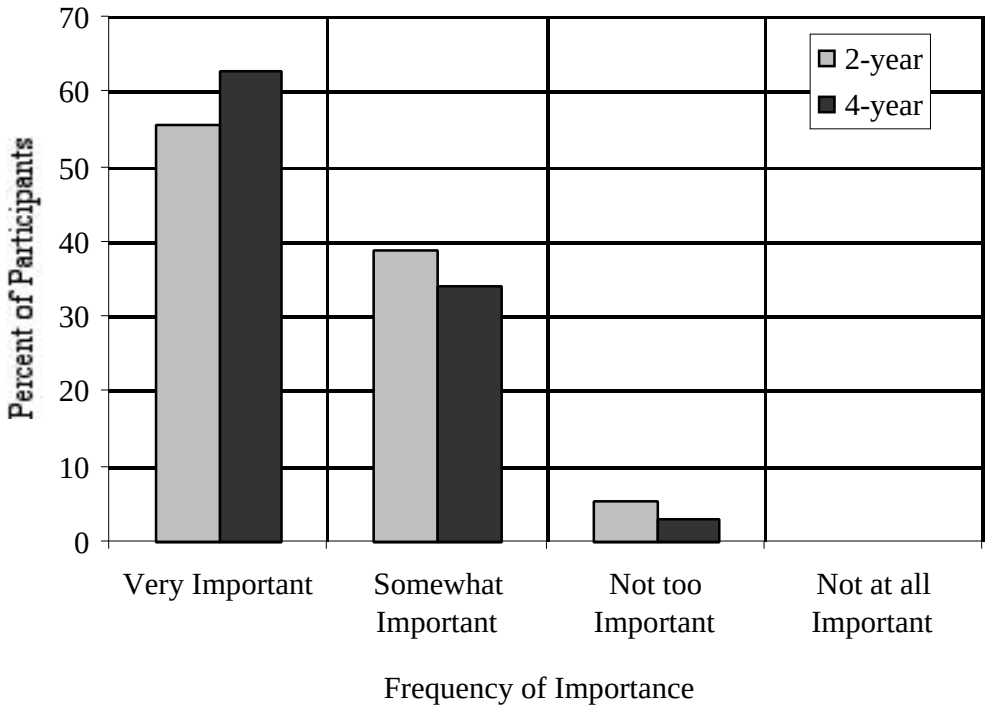

Figure 43. Distribution of responses for Importance Topic #2.

Notes:

1. 15 responses (2.5%) were missing data.
2. 358 participants (60.5%) rated knowledge of pending legislation that impacts children very important.
3. 211 participants (35.6%) evaluated knowledge of pending legislation that impacts children somewhat important.
4. 23 participants (3.9%) ranked knowledge of pending legislation that impacts children not too important.
5. No participants (0.0%) rated knowledge of pending legislation that impacts children not at all important.

Importance Topic #3

Administrative policies that impact children

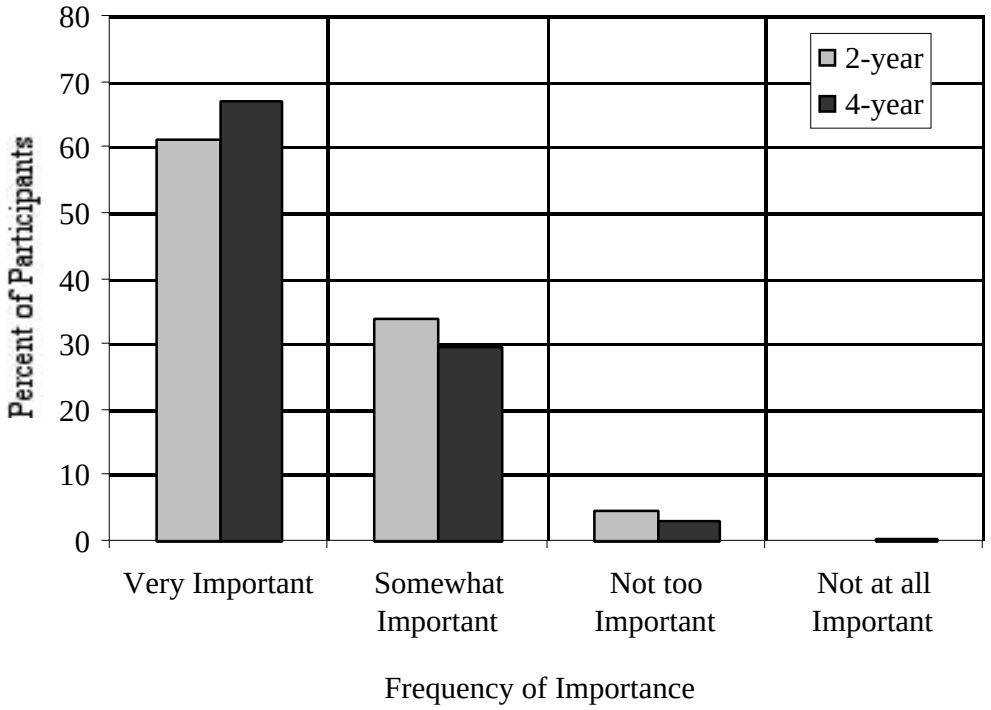

Figure 44. Distribution of responses for Importance Topic #3.

Notes:

1. 12 responses (2.0%) were missing data.
2. 388 participants (65.2%) rated knowledge of administrative policies that impact children very important.
3. 185 participants (31.1%) evaluated knowledge of administrative policies that impact children somewhat important.
4. 21 participants (3.5%) ranked knowledge of administrative policies that impact children not too important.
5. 1 participants (0.17%) rated knowledge of administrative policies that impact children not at all important.

Importance Topic #4

Mandates that impact children and learning

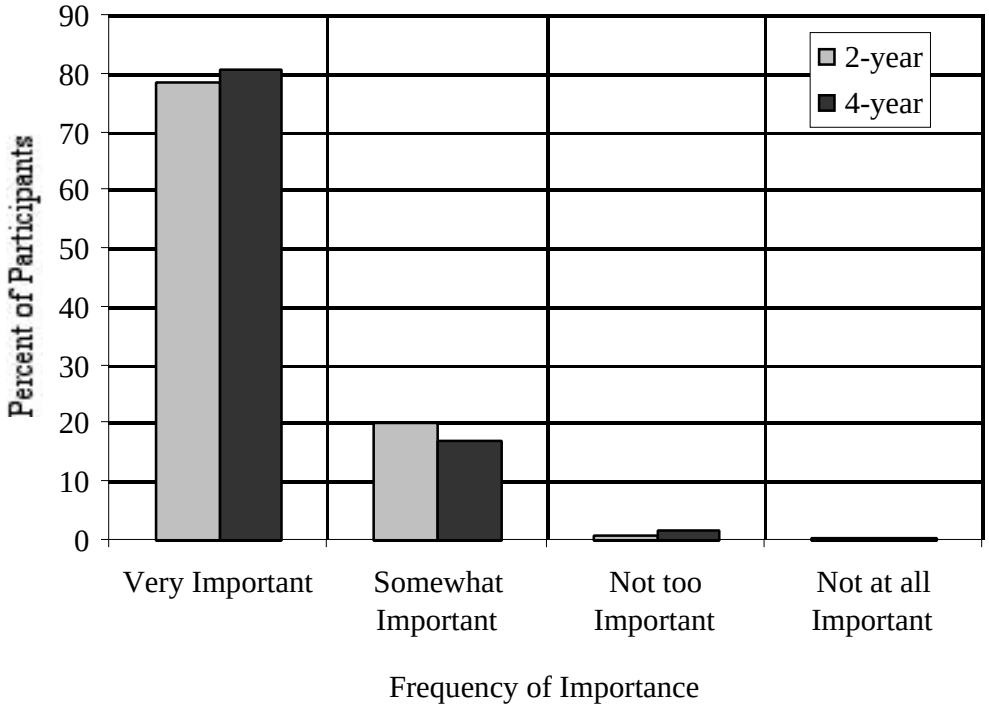

Figure 45. Distribution of responses for Importance Topic #4.

Notes:

1. 12 responses (2.0%) were missing data.
2. 476 participants (80.0%) rated knowledge of mandates that impact children and learning very important.
3. 108 participants (18.2%) evaluated knowledge of mandates that impact children and learning somewhat important.
4. 9 participants (1.5%) ranked knowledge of mandates that impact children and learning not too important.
5. 2 participants (.34%) rated knowledge of mandates that impact children and learning not at all important.

Importance Topic #5

Quality child care

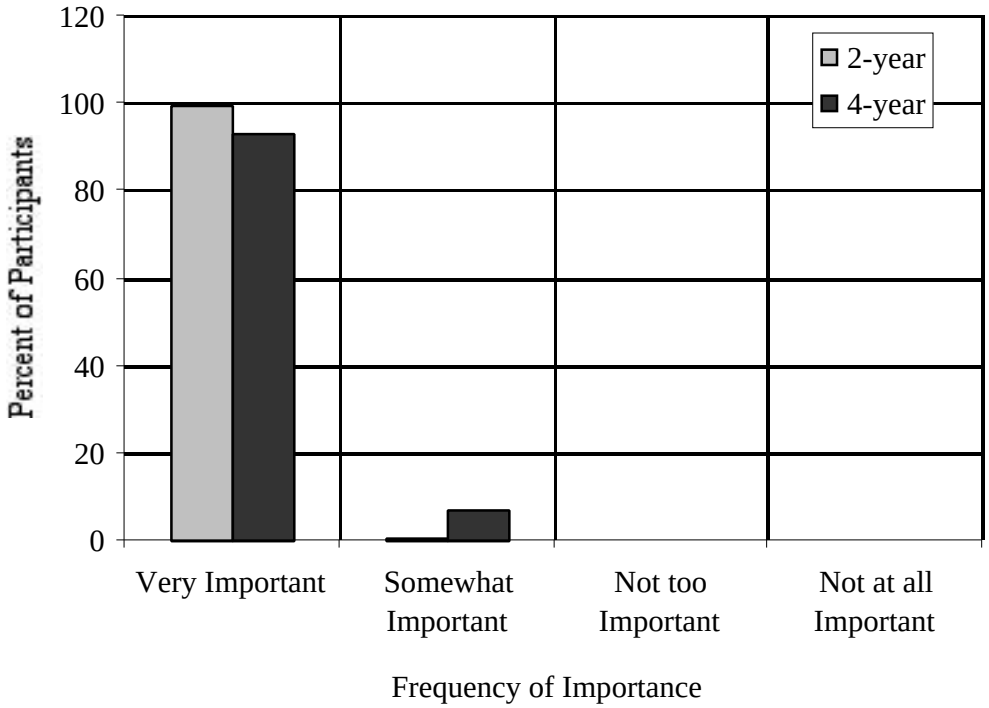

Figure 46. Distribution of responses for Importance Topic #5.

Notes:

1. 10 responses (1.6%) were missing data.
2. 569 participants (95.3%) rated knowledge of quality child care very important.
3. 28 participants (4.7%) evaluated knowledge of quality child care somewhat important.
4. No participants ranked knowledge of quality child care not too important.
5. No participants rated knowledge of quality child care not at all important.

Importance Topic #6

Social services available for families

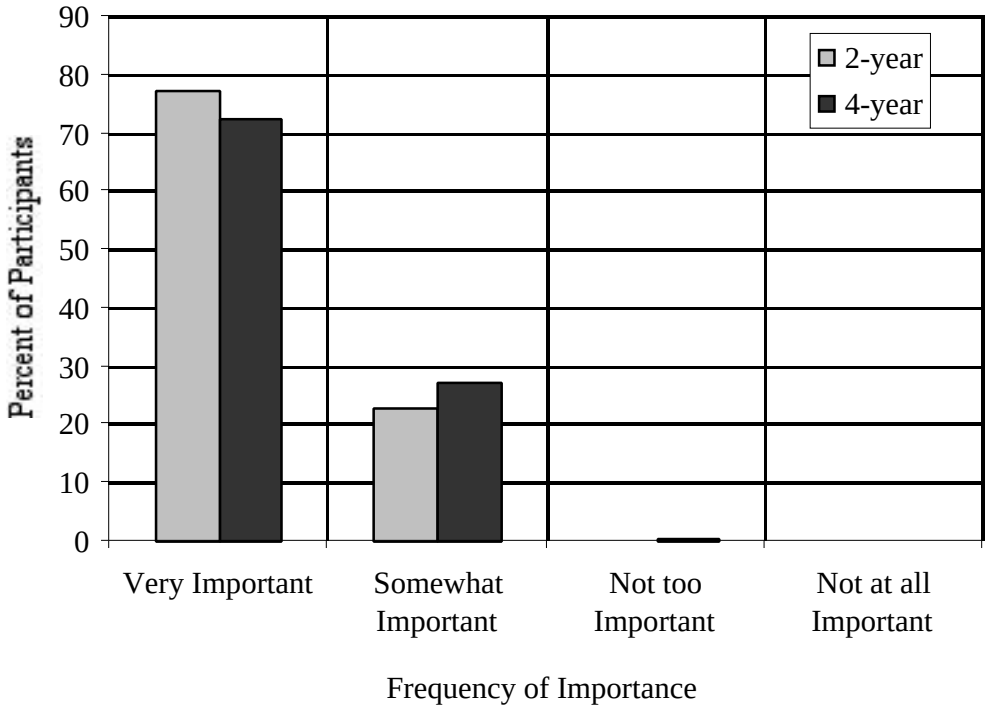

Figure 47. Distribution of responses for Importance Topic #6.

Notes:

1. 12 responses (2.0%) were missing data.
2. 440 participants (73.9%) rated knowledge of social services available for families very important.
3. 153 participants (25.7%) evaluated knowledge of social services available for families somewhat important.
4. 2 participants (0.34%) ranked knowledge of social services available for families not too important.
5. No participants rated knowledge of social services available for families not at all important.

Importance Topic #7

Resources for children and families in need

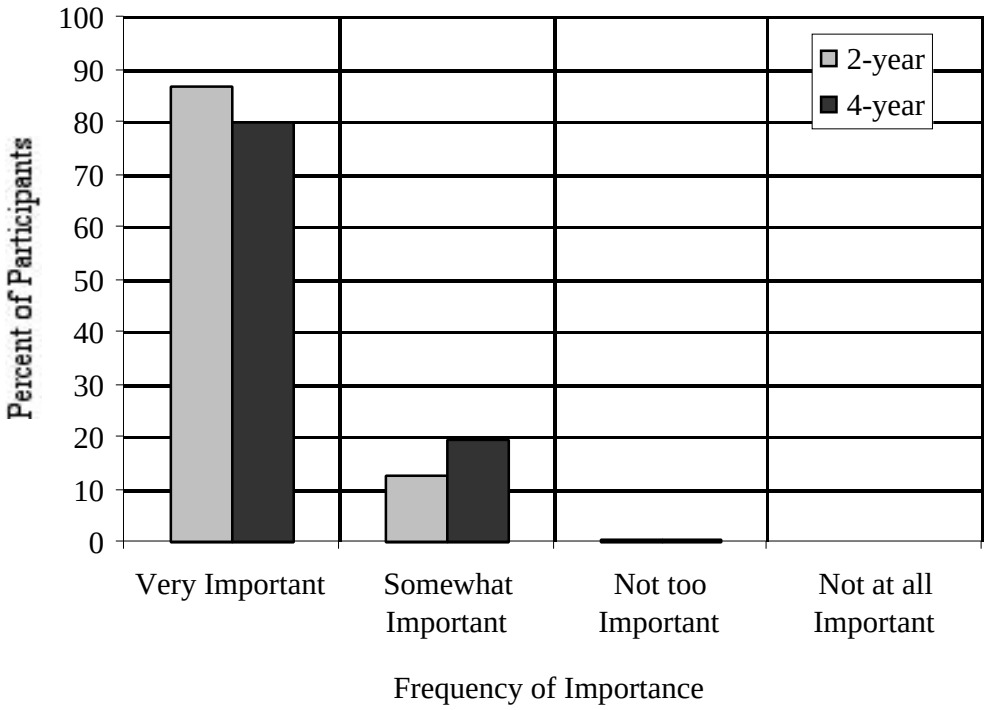

Figure 48. Distribution of responses for Importance Topic #7.

Notes:

1. 11 responses (1.8%) were missing data.
2. 491 participants (82.4%) rated knowledge of resources for children and families in need very important.
3. 102 participants (17.1%) evaluated knowledge of resources for children and families in need somewhat important.
4. 3 participants (0.50%) ranked knowledge of resources for children and families in need not too important.
5. No participants rated knowledge of resources for children and families in need not at all important.

The chart essay Figures 42-48 revealed responses clustered in the Very Important and Somewhat Important response range. Teacher educators strongly believe that early childhood preprofessionals should learn about quality child care. Only two items, administrative policies that impact children and pending legislation that impacts children, received less than 70% in the Very Important category.

The second part of the analysis of importance of advocacy involved determining the overall mean for each item to identify those advocacy topics believed most important and least important in preparing early childhood preprofessionals. Table 18 shows the mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*) for importance of each advocacy topic in the questionnaire with one indicating the highest level of importance and four the lowest level of importance. The minimum (Min) and maximum (Max) rating are given for each strategy. The data in Table 18 indicate that overall the selected advocacy topics are considered very important in preparing early childhood preprofessionals. Pending legislation that impacts children and administrative policies that impact children had the highest mean which indicates that even though the items are considered very important overall, fewer participants rated these topics very important in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals.

Table 18

Frequency of Importance of Advocacy Topics Reported by Early Childhood Educators

Item	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Min	Max
Public policies that impact children	596	1.22	.44	1	3
Pending legislation that impacts children	592	1.43	.57	1	3
Administrative policies that impact children	595	1.39	.56	1	4
Mandates that impact children and learning	595	1.22	.47	1	4
Quality child care	597	1.05	.21	1	2
Social services available for families	595	1.26	.44	1	3
Resources for children and families in need	596	1.18	.40	1	3

Note. A score of one indicates very important and four not very important.

The final analysis of importance of advocacy topics involved determining the overall mean of importance of advocacy topics for two-year and four-year institutions. Table 19 reports the mean (*M*) and the standard deviation (*SD*) for importance of advocacy topics with the minimum (Min) and maximum (Max) given for each strategy. Means were calculated by averaging the scores for each topic for each type of institution. One indicates very important and four represents a rating of not too important. The means in Table 19 reveal few differences in the two types of institutions in the rating of importance of advocacy topics.

Table 19

Importance of Knowledge of Advocacy Information for Two-Year and Four-Year Institutions

Institution	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Min	Max
Two-year	195	1.26	.30	1	2.57
Four-year	393	1.25	.30	1	2.57

Note. Mean of importance of knowledge of advocacy information was determined by averaging the items in question ten of the teacher educator questionnaire by institution.

Analysis of Research Question Five

According to the leaders in the field of early childhood education, what are the priorities for advocacy training of preservice teachers?

The telephone interviews of leaders of early childhood professional organizations provided the data for research question five. Fourteen leaders of early childhood professional organizations participated in the telephone interviews. The interviews included open-ended response items and responses based on a Likert scale.

Leaders of early childhood professional organizations responded to the same advocacy skills question as the early childhood teacher educators. The leaders were asked to indicate the importance of each advocacy skill in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals. The following Likert scale was used: 1-*Very Important*, 2-*Somewhat Important*, 3-*Not too Important* and 4-*Not at all Important*. Table 20 shows the means for each advocacy skill. The leaders of early childhood organizations rated all but one skill a

one or a two indicating that all skills are viewed as important. The means indicate that the leaders of early childhood professional organizations view effective communication skills as the most important advocacy skill. The leaders also rated knowledge of professional organizations that support children and knowledge of the code of ethics as it relates to advocacy as very important in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals.

Table 20

Means for Importance of Advocacy Skills as Rated by Early Childhood Leaders

Advocacy skill	*n*	*M*	Min	Max
Effective communication skills	14	1.14	1	2
Development of interpersonal skills	14	1.43	1	2
Understanding of the professional role	14	1.43	1	2
Knowledge current issues and events that affect children, families, and the profession	14	1.29	1	2
Knowledge of the conditions of children and families in society	14	1.36	1	2
Public Policy affecting children, families, and programs	14	1.43	1	2
Code of ethics as it relates to advocacy	14	1.21	1	2
Definition of advocacy and advocate	14	1.5	1	3
Knowledge of the political process	14	1.5	1	2
How to communicate with legislative representatives	14	1.5	1	2
Knowledge of professional organizations that support children	14	1.21	1	2

Note. Mean of importance of advocacy skills was determined by averaging the responses to question seven of the interview of the leaders of early childhood professional organizations.

Leaders of professional organizations rated the importance of the same advocacy topics included in the teacher educator questionnaire. The leaders indicated the importance of each advocacy topic in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals. The following Likert scale was used: 1-*Very Important,* 2-*Somewhat Important,* 3-*Not too Important* and 4-*Not at all Important*. Consistent with the findings on the teacher educator questionnaire, the leaders rated quality child care as the most important topic. Table 21 details the mean (*M*) score for each item rated by leaders of professional organizations. The data show that leaders of professional organizations also believe that knowledge of public policies that impact children is a very important topic for early childhood preprofessionals.

Table 21

Means for Importance of Selected Advocacy Topics

Advocacy Topic	*n*	*M*	Min	Max
Public policies that impact children	14	1.29	1	2
Pending legislation that impacts children	14	1.64	1	3
Administrative policies that impact children	14	1.64	1	2
Mandates that impact children and learning	14	1.43	1	3
Quality child care	14	1.0	1	1
Social services available for families	14	1.5	1	3
Resources for children and families in need	14	1.57	1	3

Note. A score of one indicates very important and four not very important.

In the telephone interview, the 14 leaders of early childhood organizations gave their responses to five open-ended questions concerning their beliefs about advocacy training for preservice teachers. Responses were measured by *text units*. A text unit is the smallest portion of a document that NUD*IST can code and analyze, and in contrast a document is the largest. A text unit can be composed of a word, sentence, paragraph, or any other portion of text. To holistically view responses and find patterns in responses, the paragraph was the text unit for the interviews of the leaders. The responses to each interview question, beginning with question three, are discussed in the following sections. Interview questions one and two are demographic in nature and were discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

Interview question three. How important is it to you that early childhood professionals be trained in advocacy issues/practices in their undergraduate coursework? Explain.

All 14 leaders reported that advocacy training was important. Responses were grouped into two categories: very important and important. Very important included responses of very important, critical and extremely important. Table 22 contains samples representative of explanations given by participants for the importance of advocacy training in preservice teacher preparation.

Table 22

Samples of Responses for Interview Question 3

Category	Samples of Participant Responses
Very Important	· Early education is a very political process · Preprofessionals need to understand the public policy standpoint not just the theory of advocacy · Children who can't vote need someone who understands to speak up for them · Important responsibility preprofessionals need to learn during their "formative years" of training
Important	· Professionals go through stages of development just like children and in the beginning they do not have the professional maturity to advocate for children · Must have an awareness of issues that affect children and understand the importance of the advocacy role although a lot of training is not relevant until they enter the field · Knowledge of children and working with children and families is critical in the early stages of the profession

Interview question four. Do you feel that preservice early childhood professionals are adequately trained in their undergraduate courses to be advocates for children and families? Explain.

Early Childhood Leaders reported that preservice early childhood professionals are not adequately trained to advocate for children and families. Responses to interview question four were grouped into three categories: no, depends on institution, and I do not know. Table 23 contains sample responses for each category.

Table 23

Samples of Responses for Interview Question 4

Category	Samples of Participants Responses
No	
	· No. There is no emphasis on advocacy.
	· No. I do not think that as a profession we are very good at advocacy.
	· No, definitely not. I think many of us who are teaching it are not really good at knowing exactly how to go about that.
Depends on Institution	
	· Yes, on this campus we have a required course. I would think that on most campuses they are not, unless they have a dedicated course.
	· I think we are getting better at doing that. I cannot speak for other campuses but I know they are in our program here.
	· I would say it is hit and miss. I do not feel there is a strong process to prepare people to advocate.
I do not know	
	· I don't have the experience to answer that question because I don't know what their training is currently.

Interview question five. What do you perceive as the benefits of an advocacy-training program in undergraduate coursework?

The leaders in the field of early childhood education identified a number of benefits of an advocacy training program in undergraduate courses. Early Childhood leaders generally perceived training at the undergraduate level as laying the foundation and building a sense of commitment and an understanding of the issues, beyond the classroom, that affect children, families and the early childhood profession. The leaders see advocacy as a part of the responsibility of all early childhood professionals because you can not separate legislation and public policy from your job. The undergraduate training provides preprofessionals with the opportunity to learn about the issues that face children and families as well as how to advocate for change. While preprofessionals are

learning about advocacy, they are mentored and guided through advocacy experiences. Meaningful advocacy experience provides them with first-hand knowledge of all the various ways early childhood professionals can advocate for children and families. Advocacy training provides early childhood preprofessionals with the tools they need to quickly become leaders in the profession. Table 24 provides a summary of their responses.

Table 24

Summary of Leader Responses Identifying the Benefits of an Advocacy Training Program in Undergraduate Courses

Samples of participant responses
· Sense of commitment to children and families · Awareness and understanding of issues · Understanding need for advocacy · Importance of communicating with others · Learn how to influence policy · Motivation to become advocates · Learn various types or ways to advocate · Provides guide or mentor · Gets them involved in the process · Builds leaders

Interview question six. What do you think should be included in early childhood preservice preparation programs to prepare future educators to advocate for children?

Early childhood leaders identified core content for advocacy training at the undergraduate level. The concepts and skills identified were consistent with the content identified in the literature and the importance attached to advocacy skills and strategies in

the teacher educator questionnaire. A critical component identified by the leaders was an understanding of all of the issues that affect children and families including family diversity, health and nutrition issues, parenting issues, diversity, education, special needs children as well as the economic issues affecting children and families in society today. Table 25 provides a summary of the content identified by the leaders in the field.

Table 25

Summary of Advocacy Training Content Suggested by Early Childhood Leaders

Summary of participant responses
· Knowledge and understanding of child development and young children · Knowledge of the issues that affect children and families at the local, state, and federal levels · Preparation to make them articulate speakers and writers so that they can express their ideas · Knowledge of the NAEYC code of ethics · Knowledge of the basic principles of advocacy including a broad definition and how to work with different audiences · Understanding why advocacy is important and that it is not a one time event · Understanding that advocates can make a difference · Understanding the political and legislative process at the local, state, and national levels · Understanding the need for teachers to advocate for policies that are appropriate for children · Practical experience with advocacy · Knowledge of organizations and resources to support advocacy efforts · Resources to stay informed about the issues

Interview question eight. What do you feel is most important for preservice professionals to learn about advocacy in their undergraduate preparation programs?

Leaders in the field of early childhood identified many items that they felt were the most important for preservice professionals to learn about advocacy in their undergraduate preparation programs. In addition to specific advocacy skills, leaders indicated that having a passion for what they believe in, developing an understanding that advocacy is a professional responsibility, and understanding that one person can make a difference are important elements in preservice training. Table 26 provides a summary of the most important elements in advocacy training content identified by the leaders in the field.

Table 26

Summary of Most Important Advocacy Content Suggested by Early Childhood Leaders

Summary of participant responses
· Information about issues, laws, services for children and families
· Knowledge of the legislative process
· Be informed about the legislators who are pro children
· Develop a belief system and learn how to articulate beliefs
· Learn that an individual can make a difference
· Advocacy is part of everyone's responsibility as an educator
· Learn the basic techniques for advocacy and how that works through different organizations
· Effective interpersonal and communication skills
· Professional ethics
· Knowledge of current issues
· Knowledge of conditions of children and families in society
· Public policy affecting children
· Definition of advocacy and advocate including types of advocacy
· Understand that they are an advocate at many levels
· Active involvement in advocacy activities as they are learning the process
· Professionalism as it relates to organizations and how they help you in advocating on behalf of children
· Develop a passion for what they believe is important

Interview question nine. Do you have any other comments regarding this study?

A review of the final interview comments indicates that the leaders in the field of early childhood education regard advocacy as an important part of preprofessional training but they feel that it is missing in many preparation programs. Those interviewed also believe that advocacy training should be more than just one course, training needs to be shared in many courses, and undergraduate students must have meaningful advocacy experiences. The leaders reported that there are many levels of advocacy participation and that it is critical for undergraduates to begin to understand the many facets of advocacy. Providing opportunities for meaningful advocacy experiences was also cited as a critical component of instruction in preparation programs. According to the leaders in the field, undergraduates need to learn that advocacy is a professional responsibility and as a profession, we must be proactive. Leaders also commented that preservice professionals need to understand the role of professional organizations as a resource for information and communication with others who have similar beliefs and influence. Some leaders indicated that there is a need for advocacy training materials. One leader interviewed indicated that advocacy is mandated in their state and expressed a hope that it will become a national mandate that child advocacy be a part of preservice training. All of the leaders interviewed regard advocacy as an important element in the training of preprofessional early childhood educators.

Analysis of Research Question Six

In what advocacy activities do early childhood teacher educators participate?

Survey participants reported advocacy activity by responding to a list of activities presented in part five of the teacher educator questionnaire and by answering an open-ended question. The advocacy participation activities in question eleven of the teacher educator questionnaire were placed in five categories representing increasing amounts of personal involvement and risk. Level 1 was the lowest level of personal involvement and risk and Level 5 represented the highest amount of personal involvement and risk. The categories are based on the works of Milbrath (1965) and Lindamood (1995). The categories used in this study are: Level 1-Spectator/Dreamer, Level 2-Donator, Level 3-Volunteer, Level 4-Initiator, Level 5-Gladiator/Fighter.

Teacher educators participated in a variety of advocacy activities. Table 27 shows the advocacy activities of teacher educators in two-year and four-year institutions during the past year. The data show that the largest percentage of teacher educators voted (96.2%) and informed others about the needs and rights of children (94.5%). Table 29 further reveals that the smallest percentage of teacher educators in the study wrote letters or articles to newspapers or magazines in support of children's issues (26.2%). Less than 50% of the participants reported participating in the public policy advocacy activities of writing, calling, and visiting legislators on behalf of children and families.

Table 27

Frequency of Participation of Early Childhood Educators in Selected Advocacy Activities During the Past Year

	2-year		4-year	
Advocacy Activity	*n*	%	*n*	%
Level 1-Dreamer				
Voted-general election	190	95.4	387	96.7
Level 2-Donator				
Monetary contribution for children	178	89.5	366	91.5
Donated time, money or items to group	185	93.0	374	93.5
Level 3-Volunteer				
Volunteered time	136	68.3	262	65.5
Organized/participated in service project	141	70.9	269	67.2
Invited person to join professional group	180	90.5	340	85.0
Level 4-Initiator				
Served on board	162	81.4	315	78.7
Held office in organization	99	59.8	225	56.3
Wrote letter/article to newspaper/magazine	45	22.6	119	29.8
Wrote letter legislator	95	47.7	186	46.5
Level 5- Gladiator/Fighter				
Informed others about needs/rights of children	189	95.0	376	94.0
Visited public official	87	43.7	171	42.7
Spoke to group	180	90.4	356	89.0
Called legislator	66	33.1	122	30.5
Spoke community group	95	47.7	212	53.0

Note. Those that did not vote indicated that they were not citizens and therefore not eligible to vote.

Survey participants responded to an open-ended question by listing the most meaningful advocacy activity in which they had participated. Of the 607 teacher educators who participated in the survey, 434 (71.5%) chose to respond to the open-ended question. The open-ended responses to question eleven in the teacher educator

questionnaire were measured by text units. A text unit is the smallest portion of a document that NUD*IST can code and analyze and a document is the largest. A text unit can be composed of a word, sentence, paragraph, or any other identified portion of text (Qualitative Solutions and Research Pty Ltd., 1997).

Responses to the open-ended questions were grouped into seven categories: dreamer, donator, volunteer, initiator, fighter, job, and miscellaneous. The categories of dreamer, donator, volunteer, initiator, and fighter are described by Lindamood (1995) as a continuum of advocacy involvement. Dreamer included responses that described advocacy participation that reflected dreams of better conditions for children and families but involved limited action on the part of the participant. Donator was comprised of responses indicating money or goods were given for a cause that supports children and families but required little personal involvement or risk. The category of volunteer outlined responses that reflected participation in activities that extended beyond the participant's job responsibilities and required the participant to give time and energy to a cause that supported children and families. The initiator category included responses that indicated the participant was involved in initiatives that included personal involvement and risk in advocacy activities that generated new ideas or methods for dealing with situations that affect children and families. Responses in the fighter category referred to the participants' advocacy activities that involved confrontation to gain changes that benefit children and families. The category of job consisted of responses that did not fit the definition of advocacy used in the study. The responses in this category were viewed by the researcher as activities that were within the scope of the

participant's role as teacher educator. The miscellaneous category consisted of responses that were related to the topic but did not fit into the other categories. Table 28 summarizes the responses to the open-ended question by category.

Table 28

Distribution of Text Units for Question 11

Description	*n* Participants	*n* Text Units	% of Total Text Units
Dreamer	1	3	0.3
Donator	17	24	3
Volunteer	106	188	22
Initiator	118	218	25
Fighter	151	303	35
Job	20	50	6
Miscellaneous	21	62	7

Note. Number of text units does not equal number of participants. Some participants supplied more than one response.

Table 29 contains samples representative of responses given by participants in answer to question 11. Samples are divided by response categories as shown in the previous table.

Table 29

Samples of Responses for Question 11

Category	Samples of Participants Responses
Dreamer	
	· Voted. Always insist students vote.
Donator	
	· Contributed money for needy children. · Gave money to Children's Defense Fund. · Donated material to an infant crisis center. · Donated time to group serving children and families.
Volunteer	
	· Traveled to Washington, D.C. for "Stand for Children". · Belonged to Junior League, a volunteer organization supporting women and children. · Worked with Domestic Violence and Head Start. · Participated in service projects to directly benefit children.
Initiator	
	· Served on board for local intervention agency for children birth to age three. · Served as Commissioner on the Children's and Families First Commission. · Served on the board of directors for Human Resource/Development Corporation including decision-making policies related to area Head Start Program and Poverty Forums. · Served on local school board.
Fighter	
	· Spoke to PTAs to get support for banning corporal punishment in schools. · Educated legislators on critical nature of education and training for childcare providers. · Spoke to state department of education to advocate for full-day kindergarten. · Worked with a state-level advocacy group to develop a training module for caregivers, parents, and others concerned with children's needs.
Job	
	· Shared the importance of advocacy with my students. · Each student in my classes is required to research and present an advocacy issue on a child development topic.

	· Currently, my position as a teacher educator is the most meaningful advocacy activity. · Teaching!
Miscellaneous	
	· The election of selected officials. · Teaching preschool Sunday School class. · Children's Defense Fund. · Worthy Wage Day.

The largest category of text units retrieved for question 11 was Fighter. Based on a pattern observed within the category, the text units were subdivided into three types of advocacy; personal advocacy, public policy advocacy, and private sector advocacy. The distribution of text units at this level of response is displayed in Table 31.

Table 30

Distribution of Text Units for Fighter

Description	*n* Participants	*n* Text Units	% of Total Text Units
Personal	54	135	23
Public Policy			
Local	10	16	2
State	52	91	10
Federal	22	37	4
Private Sector	13	24	3

Note. Number of text units does not equal number of participants. Some participants supplied more than one response.

For the purpose of this study, the participation activities in question eleven of the teacher educator questionnaire were placed in five categories representing increasing amounts of personal involvement and risk with 1 being the lowest and 5 representing the

highest amount of involvement and risk. The categories used in this study are: Level 1-Spectator/Dreamer, Level 2-Donator, Level 3-Volunteer, Level 4-Initiator, Level 5-Gladiator/Fighter. Each activity is weighted from 1-5 depending on the level of assigned advocacy: Level 1 activities received 1 point and level 5 activities received 5 points. Each participant received a score for advocacy participation.

The overall mean of advocacy participation for two-year and four-year institutions was calculated. Table 31 shows the mean (*M*) advocacy participation score for two-year and four-year institutions. The two-year and four-year institutions have similar patterns of participation in advocacy activities. In both types of institutions some teacher educators reported that they had participated in all of the selected advocacy activities over the past year (Max 55) and some reported participating in few advocacy activities (Min 5, 9). The standard deviation reveals that there is a large variance in the participation scores (*SD* 10.68, 10.88) of both groups.

Table 31

Mean of Advocacy Participation by Institution

Institution	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Min	Max
Two-year	199	35.06	10.68	5.0	55.0
Four-year	399	35.15	10.88	9.0	55.0

The final analysis of the advocacy participation data used multiple regression analysis to determine if there is a relationship between the dependent variable participation in advocacy activities and a subset of independent variables. The independent variables are: the number of hours of advocacy skills training included in courses taught; the frequency of inclusion of advocacy skills and activities in courses taught; and the importance attached to selected advocacy skills, activities, and content. According to Guidry (2001), sound interpretation of the multiple regression procedure should include both beta weights and structure coefficients in order to avoid incorrect interpretations. Table 32 shows a summary of the results of the multiple regression procedure. The results indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship (p = <.0001) between the selected independent variables and advocacy participation. The six independent variables in combination account for 20 % (R^2 = .21, *ADJ* R^2 = .20) of the variation in advocacy participation.

Table 32

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Participation in Advocacy Activities (n= 597)

Source	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Model	6	12583	2097.12	22.63	<.0001
Error	509	47165	92.66		
Total	515	59747			

p<.01.

The standardized weights and structure coefficients for the regression were calculated. Table 33 shows the results of the analysis. Three independent variables emerged as significant predictors for participation in advocacy: the frequency of inclusion of advocacy skills in courses taught (MEANSKILL) (*beta* = -. 16, p = .007, r_s =-.86, r_s^2 = .74) , the frequency of inclusion of advocacy activities in courses taught (MEANACTIV) (*beta* = -.21, p = .001, r_s = -.92, r_s^2 = .84,), and the importance attached to selected advocacy activities (IMPACT) (*beta* = .16, p = .008, r_s = -.69, r_s^2 = .47). Based on the analysis of the standardized weights, structure coefficients, and statistical significance, no other variables emerged as a noteworthy predictor for advocacy participation.

Table 33

Standardized Weights and Structure Coefficients for the Regression Analysis

Variable	*beta*	p	r_s	r_s^2
Hours	-0.06	0.210	-0.55	0.30
MEANSKILL	-0.16	0.007	-0.86	0.74
MEANACTIV	-0.21	0.001	-0.92	0.84
IMPSKILL	0.06	0.349	-0.48	0.23
IMPACT	-0.16	0.008	-0.69	0.47
IMPCON	-0.03	0.591	-0.46	0.21

p<.01.

After identification of the noteworthy predictors discussed above, a follow-up regression analysis was performed to determine the level of prediction for these variables in and of themselves. The results of the analysis are displayed in Table 34. The results

indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship (p = <.0001) between the noteworthy independent variables and advocacy participation. The three independent variable in combination account for 20 % (R^2 = .20, *ADJ* R^2 = .19) of the variation in advocacy participation.

Table 34

Summary of Follow-up Multiple Regression Analysis

Source	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Model	3	12338	4112.79	43.72	<.0001
Error	534	50228	94.06		
Total	537	62567			

p<.01.

The standardized weights and structure coefficients for the follow-up regression were calculated. Table 35 shows the results of the analysis. The squared structure coefficients indicate that: MEANACTIV (*beta* = -0.22, r_s^2 = 0.84) has the most value (84%) for influence in predicting advocacy participation; MEANSKILL (*beta* = -0.16, r_s^2 = 0.73) explains 73% of the effect; and IMPACT (*beta* = -0.15, r_s^2 = 0.50) explains 50% of the observed effect. This indicates that the three predictor variables are correlated and are related to each other. Thus, 20% of the variability in advocacy participation is predicted by knowing scores on these three independent variables. The similarity between the current follow-up analysis and the first multiple regression supports the selection of the three primary predictors.

Table 35

Standardized Weights and Structure Coefficients for the Follow-up Regression Analysis

Variable	*beta*	*p*	*rs*	rs^2
MEANSKILL	-0.16	0.0053	-0.85	0.73
MEANACTIV	-0.22	0.0002	-0.92	0.84
IMPACT	-0.15	0.0009	-0.71	0.50

p<.01.

Table 36 shows the results of the post hoc correlation analysis between the frequency of inclusion of advocacy activities in courses taught, the importance attached to selected advocacy activities, and the frequency of inclusion of advocacy skills in courses taught and the subcomponents Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5 of participation in advocacy. Correlations between the frequency of inclusion of advocacy activities in courses taught, the importance attached to selected advocacy activities, and the frequency of inclusion of advocacy skills in courses taught and four levels of advocacy involvement were statistically significant. Higher levels of inclusion of advocacy activities and importance of advocacy activities were associated with Level 2, Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5 of advocacy participation (See Table 36). Correlations between inclusion of advocacy skills in courses taught and the subcomponents Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5 of participation were statistically significant. None of the independent variables was significantly correlated with Level 1.

Table 36

Correlations between the Independent Predictor Variables with the Subcomponent Levels of Advocacy Participation

Independent Predictor Variable	Subcomponents of advocacy participation Level 1 Dreamer	Level 2 Donator	Level 3 Volunteer	Level 4 Initiator	Level 5 Fighter
Activities included	.01 (*n*=578)	-.12** (*n*=578)	-.27** (*n*=578)	-.26** (*n*=577)	-.38** (*n*=578)
Importance activities	-.03 (*n*=579)	-.12** (*n*=579)	-.22** (*n*=579)	-.23** (*n*=578)	-.25** (*n*=579)
Skills included	-.01 (*n*=564)	-.07 (*n*=564)	-.20** (*n*=564)	-.27** (*n*=563)	-.36** (*n*=564)

***p* < .01.

Analysis of Research Question Seven

Are there differences in the advocacy training of preservice teacher educators according to selected demographic categories?

The data from the 607 teacher educator surveys was analyzed using a three-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The categorical independent variables of interest were institution type (2-year, 4-year), region of the country (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West), and the years of early childhood program operation (15 years or less, 16-25 years, 25 years or more). The multivariate dependent variable consisted of the hours of class time devoted to advocacy, the extent of inclusion of advocacy skills (mean of items 1-11 for question 5), and the extent of inclusion of advocacy strategies (mean of items 12-20 for questions 5). For the purpose of this analysis, data from years of program

operation were collapsed into three categories of comparable size. The MANOVA yielded no significant three-way, two-way, or main effects differences at the $p = .05$ level of significance. Table 37 shows the results of the procedure.

Table 37

Three way Multivariate Analysis of Variance for Training (*n*=607)

Effect	Wilk's Lambda	*p* value	η^2
Years of program operation	0.9845	0.2531	.016
Region	0.9887	0.7694	.011
Type institution	0.9957	0.5450	.004
Region X Years program operation	0.9747	0.8010	.025
Type institution X Region	0.9956	0.9875	.004
Type institution X Years program operation	0.9834	0.2131	.017
Type institution X Region X Years program operation	0.9602	0.3124	.040

Note. The alpha level was set at .05 for all statistical tests.

Analysis of Research Question Eight

What advocacy activities suggest a model advocacy program for preservice teacher educators?

Survey participants, teacher educators, and leaders of early childhood professional organizations rated selected advocacy skills, strategies, and topics by the importance they

attached to each item in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals. Although the item means indicate that teacher educators believe all of the selected advocacy skills are very important in the preparation of early childhood professionals, the following advocacy skills received the highest scores (see Table 14): effective communication skills; development of interpersonal skills; understanding of the professional role; and knowledge of current issues and events that affect children, families, and the profession. Participants rated joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession the most important advocacy strategy (see Table 16). All of the selected advocacy topics were rated very important in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals with quality child care and resources for children and families receiving the highest scores (see Table 18).

Leaders of the selected early childhood professional organizations also rated advocacy skills and topics by the importance they attached to each item in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals. The leaders rated all of the selected advocacy skills very important with effective communication skills and code of ethics as it relates to advocacy receiving the highest scores (see Table 20). Leaders of the professional organizations rated all of the selected advocacy topics very important with quality child care and public policies that impact children receiving the highest ratings (see Table 21). The analysis of the open-ended responses of the leaders of early childhood professional organizations revealed that advocacy is a very important part of the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals (see Table 22).

Summary

The results of the study indicate that early childhood teacher educators and leaders of early childhood professional organizations believe that advocacy is important in the preparation of early childhood professionals. Teacher educators currently include a number of advocacy skills and activities in the courses they teacher in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals. The discussion of the findings and a model for teaching advocacy are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Many children today face challenges to their health and well-being and are often at-risk of failure in school and in life. Poverty, lack of adequate health care, poor nutrition and low quality care and education are difficult obstacles for children and families today to overcome without advocates who will speak for them. Early childhood professionals who work with children every day are in a unique position to know and understand the needs of children and to advocate for changes that will support the healthy growth and development of all children. The purpose of the present study was to examine the current advocacy practices of early childhood teacher educators in two-year and four-year institutions throughout the United States and explore the beliefs of leaders in the field of early childhood regarding the importance of advocacy instruction in preservice preparation programs. The main focus of the study was to provide information that can be helpful to educators who must respond to the many demands associated with preparing early childhood professionals. The study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent do teacher educators include advocacy training in the preparation of preservice teacher educators?

2. What are the advocacy strategies currently included in the preparation programs of preservice early childhood professionals?
3. What are the reasons for including or not including advocacy training in preservice courses?
4. What do preservice teacher educators see as priorities in the advocacy training of early childhood professionals?
5. According to the leaders in the field of early childhood education, what are the priorities for advocacy training of preservice teachers?
6. In what advocacy activities do early childhood teacher educators participate?
7. Are there differences in the advocacy training of preservice teacher educators according to selected demographic categories?
8. What advocacy activities constitute a model advocacy program for preservice teacher educators?

Additionally, the study was designed to: (a) determine what leaders in the field of early care and education believe constitutes appropriate advocacy training for early childhood preprofessionals, (b) describe the advocacy activities of teacher educators, (c) determine if there is a difference in the advocacy preparation of two-year and four-year institutions, and (d) recommend a model for including advocacy in preservice teacher preparation programs. The summary of results and a discussion of the findings are presented in this chapter. The final section of this chapter includes recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Results

The early childhood profession regards advocacy as a professional and ethical responsibility yet little is known about what traditional early childhood preparation programs are doing to prepare preprofessionals to advocate for children, families, and the profession. This study surveyed selected early childhood teacher educators who currently teach undergraduate preservice professionals in two-year and four-year institutions throughout the United States to identify and evaluate the existing advocacy training practices in preservice education. The study further analyzed the beliefs of practicing professionals regarding the importance of advocacy and contrasted them with the beliefs of selected leaders in the field of early childhood education to evaluate the need for advocacy instruction in undergraduate programs.

The population for this study was comprised of members of the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE), the American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators (ACCESS), and selected leaders of the largest early childhood professional organizations. Instruments used in the study were “A Matter of Opinion: Evaluating PreProfessional Advocacy Training Practices” questionnaire and “Evaluating PreProfessional Advocacy Training Practices: Telephone Interview Protocol”. The questionnaire was mailed to all members of NAECTE and ACCESS with a return rate of 52.7%. Forty percent of the teacher educators who returned the questionnaire currently teach undergraduate preservice professionals in two-year and four-year institutions throughout the United States and met the criteria for participation in

the study. All fourteen leaders of the selected early childhood professional organizations participated in the telephone interviews.

The sample for this study consisted of 607 early childhood teacher educators who chose to complete the mailed questionnaire and met the criteria for inclusion in the study. Fourteen leaders of early childhood professional organizations participated in the telephone interviews. Sixty-seven percent (*n*=405) of the participants who completed the questionnaire taught in a four-year institution and 33% (*n*=202) taught in a two-year institution. Participants in the study represent 48 of the 50 states and all geographic regions of the United States. Most participants in the study are from the Midwestern region (35%) of the United States. The early childhood teacher educators that participated in the study were predominately female (94%), between the ages of 46 and 60 (69%), European Americans (91%) and were in their current position from 0-10 years (53%).

Current Advocacy Instructional Practices and Beliefs

Research questions one through four were designed to elicit information from the participants that would enable the researcher to describe the current advocacy instructional practices and beliefs of teacher educators in early childhood preprofessional programs. The participants responded to questions regarding courses taught, textbooks used, and hours of class time spent on advocacy instruction. Specific advocacy skills and strategies taught by the participants in their courses were identified. The teacher educators that participated in the study also identified those skills, strategies, and topics that they believed were important for inclusion in programs for early childhood preprofessionals. Finally, the participants ranked reasons for the inclusion of advocacy in

their courses. The following is a summary of the findings that help describe current advocacy instructional practices and beliefs. All items are listed in the order of their rating with the highest score listed first.

Beliefs. All of the advocacy skills, strategies, and topics included in this study were rated important in the preparation of preservice early childhood professionals. The following is a summary of the findings related to the importance attached to selected advocacy skill, strategies, and topics.

1. The following advocacy skills included in the study were rated *very important:*
   - effective communication skills
   - development of interpersonal skills
   - understanding the professional role
   - knowledge of current issues related to children, families and the profession
   - knowledge of the conditions of children and families in society
   - knowledge of professional organizations that support children
   - public policy affecting children, families and programs
2. Participants reported the following advocacy skills as *somewhat important* in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals:
   - code of ethics as it relates to advocacy
   - definition of advocacy and advocate
   - knowledge of the political process

- how to communicate with legislative representatives

All of the advocacy strategies were rated important in the preparation of preservice early childhood professionals.

1. Joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession was rated *very important.*
2. The following advocacy strategies were rated *somewhat important* in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals:
   - volunteer activities to support children and families
   - utilizing the internet for legislative updates and information on child issues
   - letters/phone call/visits to legislators/policymakers
   - advocacy issue debates
   - position papers on policy issues
   - writing letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families
   - advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences
   - donations to groups that support children and families

Participants rated the importance of learning about selected advocacy topics in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals. The participants rated all of the advocacy topics included in the study *very important*. The topics are listed with the highest score first:

- quality child care
- resources for children and families in need
- public policies that impact children and families
- mandates that impact children and learning
- social services available for families
- administrative policies that impact children
- pending legislation that impacts children

Instructional practices. Although participants indicated that advocacy instruction is important in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals, few participants (12%) teach courses in early childhood preparation programs that are entirely devoted to advocacy instruction. Specific advocacy textbooks were used by only 11% of the participants. The results further indicate that 77% of the participants use less than ten hours a semester for specific advocacy instruction and discussions.

Participants in the study rated the frequency of inclusion of selected advocacy skills, strategies, and topics in their courses. Results indicate that all of the advocacy skills selected from the literature were included in preprofessional early childhood courses although some skills were more frequently taught than others. Understanding the professional role was the most frequently (86%) included advocacy skill and communicating with legislative representatives the least (10%) included advocacy skill. The following is a summary of the findings related to the frequency of inclusion of the selected advocacy skills, strategies, and topics in the courses of the participants. All findings are listed with the highest score first.

1. Participants reported *frequently* including the advocacy skills listed below in their courses.
    - understanding the professional role
    - effective communication skills
    - knowledge of current issues related to children, families, and the profession
    - knowledge of the conditions of children and families in society
    - development of interpersonal skills and knowledge of professional organizations that support children
2. Participants reported *sometimes* including the advocacy skills listed below in their courses.
    - public policy affecting children, families, and programs
    - code of ethics as it relates to advocacy
    - definition of advocacy and advocate
    - knowledge of the political process.
3. Participants reported *rarely* including the following advocacy skills in their courses: how to communicate with legislative representatives.

Participants in the study identified strategies that were used in courses to teach advocacy. All of the strategies selected from the literature were included in preprofessional early childhood courses although some strategies were more frequently utilized than others. The most frequently (69%) included advocacy strategy was joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession and the least (37%)

included strategy was using advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences. The following is a summary of the findings for the frequency of inclusion of advocacy strategies. Each strategy is listed according to the score received from highest to lowest.

1. Participants reported *frequently* including the strategy of encouraging students to join professional organizations to stay informed about the profession.
2. Participants reported *sometimes* including the following advocacy strategies in their courses.
   - volunteer activities to support children and families
   - advocacy issue debates
   - utilizing the Internet for legislative updates and information on child issues
3. Participants reported *rarely* including the following advocacy strategies in their courses.
   - position papers on policy issues
   - letters/phone calls visits to representatives
   - writing letters to the editor in support of children and families
   - donations to groups that support children and families
   - advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences

Participant responses in the open-ended comment section of the questionnaire indicated that there were diverse perspectives concerning the extent of advocacy instruction in preservice programs. Concerns were raised about the ability of

preprofessionals to assume the role of advocate at this early stage of their career. Some participants indicated that although they did not spend much time on advocacy in their courses, advocacy was included more in other courses in their program. Others stated that advocacy was not consistently included in courses in their program; advocacy was only included if the person teaching the course was interested in advocacy.

Reasons for Inclusion of Advocacy. Another element of instructional practice explored in this study was the reason or reasons teacher educators include or do not include advocacy instruction in their preservice courses. A forced choice response format was presented for participants to rank six reasons for including advocacy information and instruction in their courses. Number one was the most important and number six the least important reason. The following list shows the ranking for reasons to include advocacy.

1 It is important for children and families

2 It is a professional responsibility

3 It is important to the profession

4 It is a moral responsibility

5 It is required by the code of ethics

6 It is required by my institution

Participants were also asked to rank reasons for not including advocacy instruction in their courses or not as much as they would like in their courses with number one the most important and number seven the least important. The reasons for not including advocacy or not as much advocacy as the educator preferred were ranked in the following order by the participants:

1 Time limitations

2 Too much required content knowledge in my course

3 Overwhelming nature of responsibilities of early childhood professionals when entering the profession

4 Other content is more important in the preparation of early childhood professionals

5 Maturity of students when they take my courses

6 Not a state requirement for teacher certification

7 Not a critical component in the early career of early childhood professionals

These responses were presented in a forced choice format and some participants indicated that the choices did not reflect their reasons for including or not including advocacy in the courses they teach. Other educators reported that they included the amount of advocacy instruction in their courses that they felt was appropriate for their students. Some participants assigned the same number to more than one response.

Leaders of Early Childhood Organizations

The fifth research question sought to determine what the leaders in the field of early childhood education see as priorities for advocacy instruction in preservice programs. Fourteen leaders of early childhood professional organizations were interviewed by telephone and responded to the same set of advocacy skills and topics questions that teacher educators rated for importance and also responded to open-ended questions regarding the importance of advocacy in the preparation of early childhood

preprofessionals. The data indicate that the leaders of early childhood professional organizations believe that advocacy training is a very important part of the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals. The following is a summary of the findings for importance of advocacy skills:

1. Leaders of early childhood organizations rated all of the selected advocacy skills *very important* in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals. The activities with the highest ratings were:
   - effective communication skills
   - code of ethics as it relates to advocacy
   - knowledge of professional organizations that support children
2. All of the advocacy topics were deemed *very important* by the leaders. Among the seven, the advocacy topics with the highest ratings were
   - quality child care
   - public policies that impact children
   - mandates that impact children and learning.

In the telephone interview, the 14 leaders of early childhood organizations gave their responses to five open-ended questions concerning their beliefs about advocacy training for preservice teachers. The following is a summary of their responses.

1. All 14 leaders reported that advocacy training was important with responses including very important, extremely important and critical.
2. Early Childhood leaders generally believe that preservice early childhood professionals are not adequately trained to advocate for children and

families in their preprofessional programs. Responses also indicate that advocacy training varies from institution to institution and from professor to professor with the profession in general lacking a coordinated approach to advocacy training.

3. The leaders in the field of early childhood education identified a number of benefits of an advocacy training program in undergraduate courses. Early Childhood leaders generally perceived training at the undergraduate level as laying the foundation, building a sense of commitment and an understanding of the issues, beyond the classroom, that affect children, families and the early childhood profession. Preprofessional training provides students with the opportunity to learn about the issues, how to advocate for children and families, to be mentored and guided while they are learning, providing them with first-hand knowledge of all the various ways early childhood professionals can advocate for children and families.

4. Early childhood leaders identified core content for advocacy training at the undergraduate level. The concepts and skills identified were consistent with the content identified in the literature and the importance attached to advocacy skills and strategies in the teacher educator questionnaire. A critical component identified by the leaders was an understanding of all of the issues that affect children and families including family diversity, health and nutrition issues, parenting issues, diversity, education, special

needs children as well as the economic issues affecting children and families in society today.

5. Leaders in the field of early childhood identified many areas of advocacy that they felt were important for preservice professionals to learn about in their undergraduate preparation programs. In addition to specific advocacy skills, leaders identified the following as important elements in preservice instruction:
   - having a passion for what they believe in
   - developing an understanding that advocacy is a professional responsibility and
   - understanding that one person can make a difference.
6. A review of the final comments of the leaders interviewed indicate that the leaders in the field of early childhood education regard advocacy as an important part of preprofessional training but they feel that it is missing in many preparation programs. Those interviewed also believe that advocacy training should be more than just one course, training needs to be shared in many courses and undergraduate students must have meaningful advocacy experiences. The leaders reported that there are levels of advocacy and that it is critical for undergraduates to begin to understand the many facets of advocacy and to have meaningful advocacy experiences in their preparation programs.

Advocacy Participation

Research question six sought to identify the advocacy activities of early childhood teacher educators. Six hundred-seven teacher educators reported advocacy participation by responding to a list of activities presented in part five of the teacher educator questionnaire and by answering an open-ended question. Responses indicate that teacher educators participated in a variety of advocacy activities over a one-year period of time. The advocacy participation activities presented in the teacher educator questionnaire were placed in five categories representing increasing amounts of personal involvement and risk. Level 1 was the lowest level of personal involvement and risk and Level 5 represented the highest amount of personal involvement and risk. The categories are based on the work of Milbrath (1965) and Lindamood (1995). The categories used in this study are: Level 1-Spectator/Dreamer, Level 2-Donator, Level 3-Volunteer, Level 4-Initiator, Level 5-Gladiator/Fighter. The following is a summary of the findings for advocacy participation activities of teacher educators:

1. Teacher educators voted in general elections, a Level 1 advocacy participation activity. All teacher educators (96.2%) who were citizens of the United States voted in general elections.
2. The Level 5 activity of informing others about the needs and rights of others is considered an important activity by teacher educators as evidenced by the 94.5% rate of participation reported by the teacher educators.

3. Although responses indicate a wide range of participation in many different advocacy activities, the analysis of the data indicated that less than 50% of the educators participated in public policy advocacy activities. Teacher educators had few contacts with legislative representatives.
4. The open-ended responses indicated that the most meaningful advocacy activities reported by teacher educators were at the highest levels of the advocacy continuum. Teacher educators reported meaningful advocacy participation at Level 4 Initiator (25%) and Level 5 Fighter (34.7%).
5. The results of the multiple regression analysis indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship (p = <.0001) between the selected independent variables and advocacy participation. A relationship exists between advocacy participation and frequency of inclusion of advocacy activities in courses taught, the importance attached to selected advocacy activities, and the frequency of inclusion of advocacy skills in courses taught. The three noteworthy variables in combination explain 20 % of the variance in participation in advocacy.
6. The *post hoc* correlation analysis between frequency of inclusion of advocacy activities in courses taught, the importance attached to selected advocacy activities, and the frequency of inclusion of advocacy skills in courses taught and the five levels of advocacy participation revealed differences in ratings. Higher rates of inclusion of advocacy activities and

higher importance ratings of advocacy activities were associated with Level 2, Level 3, Level 4 and Level 5 of advocacy participation. Correlations between inclusion of advocacy skills in courses taught and the subcomponents Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5 of participation were statistically significant. None of the independent variables was significantly correlated with Level 1.

Institutional Differences

Research question seven sought to determine if there are differences in the advocacy training of preservice teacher educators according to selected demographic categories. The data from the 607 teacher educator surveys were analyzed using a three-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The categorical independent variables were institution type (2-year, 4-year), region of the country (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West), and the years of early childhood program operation (15 years or less, 16-25 years, 25 years or more). The multivariate dependent variables included the hours of class time devoted to advocacy, the extent of inclusion of advocacy skills, and the extent of inclusion of advocacy strategies. The MANOVA yielded no significant three-way, two-way, or main effects differences at the $p < .05$ level of significance.

Advocacy Model for Preservice Teacher Preparation Programs

Research question eight sought to determine a model for advocacy instruction in preservice teacher education programs. Survey participants, teacher educators and of early childhood professional organizations, rated selected advocacy skills, strategies, and topics by the importance they attached to each item in the preparation of early

childhood preprofessionals. The data revealed the following:

1. Teacher educators and leaders of early childhood professional organizations believe that all of the selected advocacy skills are very important in the preparation of early childhood professionals. The following advocacy skills received the highest scores:
   - effective communication skills;
   - development of interpersonal skills;
   - understanding of the professional role;
   - knowledge of current issues and events that affect children, families, and the profession; and
   - code of ethics as it relates to advocacy.
2. Teacher educators rated joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession the most important advocacy skill. Leaders of early childhood organizations were not asked to respond to advocacy strategy questions because not all leaders were teacher educators.
3. All of the selected advocacy topics were rated very important in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals with quality child care, resources for children and families, and public policies that impact children receiving the highest scores.

Discussion

This study investigated the extent of advocacy instruction included in early childhood preprofessional programs in two-year and four-year institutions across the

United States as well as the perceived importance of advocacy instruction in such programs. Teacher educators who participated in the mailed questionnaire provided information on advocacy teaching practices, beliefs about the importance of advocacy in preprofessional programs, advocacy participation activities, and reasons for including or not including advocacy instruction. Leaders of early childhood professional organizations who participated in the telephone interviews provided information about their beliefs about the importance of advocacy instruction in early childhood preprofessional programs. The analysis revealed that many advocacy skills are currently included in early childhood preprofessional courses. However, practices were also revealed that will likely have a negative impact on preparing professionals who are successful advocates for children, families, and the profession if not systematically addressed in early childhood preprofessional programs. The discussion that follows consists of conclusions based on the findings of this study synthesized in relation to the literature.

Current Advocacy Instructional Practices and Beliefs

The teacher educators in this study, in general, recognized the importance of advocacy instruction in preservice preparation programs. However, teacher educator responses revealed that few advocacy courses in early childhood preprofessional preparation programs are devoted entirely to advocacy instruction and most teacher educators spend few class hours a semester on specific advocacy content. Twelve percent of the participants teach courses entirely devoted to advocacy and just 11% of all participants reported using an advocacy textbook in any of the courses taught. Teacher educators (77%) in the study reported using less than ten class hours a semester on

advocacy instruction and discussion of advocacy issues. These findings are consistent with the findings of Stegelin (1999) who concluded that few early childhood teacher education programs offer courses that are entirely focused on advocacy and policy content at the undergraduate level.

The participants in this study teach a variety of early childhood preprofessional courses and consistently reported inclusion of professional knowledge skills and the exclusion of public policy skills and strategies. This information suggests that there is an absence of a structured, inclusive approach to advocacy instruction in early childhood preservice programs. Cahill (1986), in a review of child advocacy training efforts, also found a lack of a consistent and structured approach to advocacy instruction in preservice early childhood programs.

Advocacy skills. On the basis of this study alone, it is difficult to be certain about the extent of specific advocacy instruction in preprofessional preparation programs. The analysis of the data shows that the advocacy skills related to understanding the professional role, for example knowledge of children and effective communication skills, were frequently included in course content. Advocacy skills related to specific advocacy content, for example the definition of advocacy and advocate and the code of ethics as it relates to advocacy, were only sometimes included in course content. Participants reported rarely providing instruction on how to communicate with legislative representatives. Although participants in this study reported frequently including many of the identified advocacy skills, the most frequently included skills seem to indicate that the focus of instruction may be knowledge of the professional role without a specific

connection to advocacy and how to advocate for children and families. The more closely a skill resembled public policy advocacy the less likely it was to be included in the course content of early childhood preprofessionals. According to Fennimore (1989), early childhood professionals need to be involved in both case and class advocacy activities which requires professionals to have knowledge of public policy. Goffin and Lombardi (1988) state that early childhood professionals need to be involved in all types of advocacy including public policy advocacy, private-sector advocacy and personal advocacy. Previous studies and reviews of advocacy practices in early childhood teacher education programs support the conclusion that preservice early childhood professionals need to be taught concrete, proactive advocacy strategies but are not receiving a structured approach to advocacy training in their preservice preparation programs (Almy, 1985; Brunson, 1997; Cahill, 1986; Caldwell, 1987; Jensen, 1986; Kagan, 1989; Lombardi, 1986).

In a survey of early childhood preservice students, Jensen (1986) found that early childhood preservice students were reluctant to become involved in advocacy activities because they felt that they lacked the knowledge about the political process necessary for successful advocacy. Lombardi (1986) and Brunson (1997) also found that students had a fear of the political process and a general lack of knowledge about the process of advocacy. The findings in the current study may explain why students have a general lack of knowledge about the process of advocacy and a fear of the political process. Few participants in this study indicated that they included instruction focused on the definition

and types of advocacy. Participants also revealed that public policy advocacy was rarely included in preprofessional courses.

Advocacy strategies. The effective strategies for developing advocacy knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified by Jensen and Hannibal (2000) were used in this study to determine the strategies included in early childhood course content to teach advocacy. Teacher educators reported frequently including only one of the strategies identified in the research: encouraging students to join professional organizations to stay informed about the profession. Participants reported that they sometimes included the following advocacy strategies in their courses: volunteer activities to support children and families, advocacy issue debates and utilizing the Internet for legislative updates and information on child issues. Participants reported rarely including the following advocacy strategies in their courses: position papers on policy issues, letters/phone calls visits to representatives, writing letters to the editor in support of children and families, donations to groups that support children and families and advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences. Thirty-seven percent of the teacher educators reported that they never include advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences in their courses for early childhood preprofessionals. The data seem to support the conclusion that the focus of instruction is the professional role rather than specific instruction on advocacy and how to advocate for children and families. The analysis of the data also suggests that the most frequently included advocacy strategies focus mostly on knowledge level activities with little participation in advocacy activities that require higher levels of application and understanding of the advocacy process. These findings are consistent with the research

that suggests there is a need for a systematic and coordinated approach to prepare early childhood preprofessionals to advocate for children, families, and the profession (Cahill, 1986; Sponseller & Fink, 1980; Stegelin, 1999).

Reasons for Inclusion of advocacy. Although the forced choice items given for including and excluding advocacy preparation in their courses may not reflect all the possible reasons for advocacy instruction, the reasons are worth considering in describing current advocacy practice. The most important reasons cited by participants for including advocacy instruction in their courses are that advocacy is important for children and families, it is a professional responsibility, and it is important to the profession. The reasons given for including advocacy that received the lowest ratings, required by code of ethics and required by my institution, seem to indicate that participants view advocacy as an important part of the profession rather than an obligation or requirement.

Participants also ranked reasons for not including advocacy instruction in their courses. The reasons receiving the highest rankings were time limitations, too much required content knowledge in my course, and the overwhelming nature of responsibilities of early childhood professionals when entering the profession. The findings in this study are consistent with the findings of Stegelin (1999) who reported that early childhood teacher education programs in the U.S are under pressure to become more subject matter oriented and this pressure is contributing to the diminishing time and emphasis on advocacy and policy.

Participants reported that the overwhelming nature of responsibilities of early childhood professionals when entering the profession was one of the top three reasons for

not including advocacy instruction in preprofessional courses. Both the open-ended responses of teacher educators and comments by some of the leaders of early childhood organizations support the idea that professionals entering the field have many, often overwhelming responsibilities. Many participants indicated that the reality of the responsibilities facing the new professional underscored the need for meaningful advocacy activities in preprofessional programs so that they are prepared to participate in advocacy once they enter the profession. Katz (1977) and Lindamood (1995) also suggest that there are developmental stages in becoming professionals and advocates just as there are developmental stages in child development.

Advocacy Participation

Lindamood (1995) asserts that advocacy by teachers is one way for the field to progress in addressing these issues. Lindamood developed an advocacy involvement continuum to illustrate the multiple levels of involvement available to early childhood professionals. Each level of the continuum consists of increasing amounts of personal involvement and risk. Participant responses in the current study indicate that teacher educators engaged in a variety of advocacy activities over a one-year period of time. Activities ranged from Level 1 voting to Level 5 informing others about the needs and rights of others. Although responses indicate a wide range of participation in many different advocacy activities, a review of the findings indicate that less than 50% of the educators participated in public policy advocacy activities. Teacher educators had few contacts with legislative representatives.

The open-ended responses indicated that the most meaningful advocacy activities reported by teacher educators were at the highest levels of the advocacy continuum. The findings also indicate that those teacher educators who participate in a variety of advocacy activities are more likely to include advocacy activities in their courses and they teach more advocacy skills in their preparation of early childhood preprofessionals. Whitebook and Ginsburg (1984) also found that teacher educators most effectively influence student involvement in advocacy if they participate in advocacy activities.

Leaders of Early Childhood Organizations

The fourteen leaders of early childhood professional organizations interviewed believe that advocacy instruction is a very important part of the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals. Other early childhood leaders have also suggested that one strategy to increase the early childhood professional's participation in advocacy is to include instruction in public policy and advocacy in teacher education programs (Almy, 1985; Caldwell, 1987; Kagan (1989), Kilmer, 1980; Lombardi, 1986; NAEYC, 1995a). Responses by the leaders of professional organizations also indicate that they believe that preservice early childhood professionals are not adequately prepared to advocate for children and families in their undergraduate preprofessional programs. The leaders' responses to open-ended questions seem to support the conclusion that advocacy instruction varies from institution to institution and from professor to professor with the profession in general lacking a coordinated approach to advocacy instruction. These findings are consistent with those of other leaders who have declared that the profession does not provide adequate training or a unified model for advocacy for children and

families (Almy, 1985; Cahill, 1986; Daniel, 1996; Fennimore, 1989; Whitebook & Ginsburg, 1984; Willer, 1998).

The leaders in the field of early childhood education identified a number of benefits of an advocacy training program in undergraduate courses. Early Childhood leaders generally perceived training at the undergraduate level as laying the foundation and building a sense of commitment and an understanding of the issues, beyond the classroom, that affect children, families and the early childhood profession. The leaders see advocacy as a part of the responsibility of all early childhood professionals because you can not separate legislation and public policy from your job. In preprofessional programs, students are learning about advocacy as they are mentored and guided through meaningful advocacy experiences. Advocacy instruction provides early childhood preprofessionals with the tools they need to quickly become leaders in the profession. This finding is consistent with that of Whitebook and Ginsburg (1984) when they discuss the need for early childhood professionals to begin learning how to be advocates early in their professional preparation programs.

Leaders of early childhood professional organizations continue to support the preparation of preservice professionals to advocate for children and families. Those interviewed believe that advocacy training should be more than just one course, training needs to be shared in many courses, and undergraduate students must have meaningful advocacy experiences. The leaders reported that there are levels or a continuum of advocacy and that it is critical for undergraduates to begin to understand the many facets of advocacy and to have meaningful advocacy experiences in their preparation programs.

Institutional Differences

Two- year and four-year institutions that prepare early childhood professionals were the target groups for this study. There were no differences found between the two types of institutions in the amount of advocacy instruction included in their programs or the importance attached to advocacy instruction. This finding was surprising because the researcher expected to find differences between the advocacy practices of two-year and four-year institutions as well as differences between the various regions of the country. The data indicate that teacher educators across the United States, in both types of institutions, feel constrained by time allocations and content requirements.

Advocacy Model for Preservice Teacher Preparation Programs

Survey participants, teacher educators and leaders of early childhood professional organizations, rated selected advocacy skills, strategies, and topics by the importance they attached to each item in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals. The data revealed the following:

- Teacher educators and leaders of early childhood professional organizations believe that advocacy skills are very important in the preparation of early childhood professionals.
- All of the selected advocacy topics were rated very important in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals.
- Time is a factor in the preparation programs of early childhood preprofessionals.
- Advocacy knowledge and participation has many levels of commitment and participation and may follow a developmental continuum.

- Advocacy is considered important for children, families, and the profession but advocacy is not consistently addressed in early childhood courses.
- The more teacher educators participate in advocacy, the more likely they are to include advocacy skills and activities in the courses they teach.

This study demonstrated that teacher educators view advocacy as important but indicates a need to reevaluate advocacy teaching practices and develop a consistent structure for the delivery of advocacy instruction across preprofessional programs. Whitbook and Ginsburg (1984) also called for early childhood instructors to reexamine and redefine teacher education curriculum to present advocacy instruction as a strand throughout the entire early childhood curriculum. Lindamood (1995) views advocacy as progressing along a continuum with opportunities for participation at many different levels of time and commitment. Almy (1985) pointed out the importance of modeling advocacy for students in preprofessional programs. Just as young children need appropriate models for social development, early childhood preprofessionals need models and experiences to develop into strong advocates for children and families.

The following model (Table 38) is based on the skills, strategies, and topics included in this study and the advocacy continuum proposed by Lindamood (1995). The model is designed to help students learn advocacy skills and strategies throughout the course of their preparation programs. The essential components are flexible and can be combined to meet the needs of a variety of preparation programs. The goal is for early childhood preprofessionals to learn how to participate in all forms of advocacy.

Table 38

Brunson Model for Advocacy Instruction in Early Childhood Preprofessional Programs

Level 1 –Understanding Children

Course Content
- Child growth and development
- Professional roles and responsibilities
- Knowledge of professional organizations that support children

Participation Activities
- Visit a variety of centers that support and educate children
- Attend meetings of organizations that support children and families
- Join professional organizations to stay informed about the profession
- Become an informed voter and vote

Level 2-Introduction to Advocacy

Course Content
- Knowledge of current issues and events that affect children, families and the profession
- Code of ethics as it relates to advocacy
- Definition of advocacy and advocate

Participation Activities
- Utilize the Internet for information on child issues
- Engage students in advocacy issue debates
- Encourage students to identify needs and find creative ways (including time and effort) to donate to groups that support children and families
- Identify groups and organizations in your community that work for the needs and rights of children and families

Level 3-Children and Families Today

Course Content
- Effective communication skills
- Development of interpersonal skills
- Knowledge of the conditions of children and families in society
- Resources for children and families in need

Topics
- Administrative policies that impact children
- Mandates that impact children and learning

- Quality child care
- Social services available for families

Activities

- Volunteer time or service to a group or project that supports children and families
- Participate in a service project that benefits children
- Invite someone to join a group that supports children and families
- Utilize the Internet for information on resources for children and families
- Create an advocacy journal or log reflecting advocacy experiences

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Level 4-Communiction and Collaboration

Course Content

- Communication skills for speaking to groups and writing letters in support of issues
- How to identify people in a position to make the desired changes
- Enlisting the support of others

Topics

- Public policies that impact children
- Organizations and groups that support children

Participation Activities

- Inform others about the needs or rights of children
- Write letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families
- Write position papers on policy issues
- Utilize the Internet for legislative updates/information on child issues
- Speak to a group on behalf of children, families, the profession
- Serve in a leadership role for a group or organization that benefits children

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Level 5-Types of Advocacy

Course Content

- Types of Advocacy
- Knowledge of the political process
- How to communicate with legislative representatives

Topics

- Pending legislation that impacts children

Participation Activities

- Letters/phone calls/visits to legislators/policy makers
- Utilize the Internet for legislative updates/information on child issues
- Visit public officials on behalf of children
- Speak to a community group on behalf of children's rights or needs

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The Brunson model for advocacy instruction in early childhood preprofessional programs allows for a variety of formats and presentation strategies to teach advocacy to preprofessionals. The most important elements of the model are the combination of skills and active participation in advocacy activities from the beginning of the preparation program and the guidance and modeling provided by teacher educators implementing the model. The model is designed to engage professionals in advocacy activities that support children and families.

Recommendations

Although a single study cannot provide all of the answers to the complex issue of advocacy instruction in preprofessional preparation programs, based on the findings of this study there are several recommendations for program changes and future research that may strengthen the advocacy practices of early childhood professionals. The recommendations include reevaluation of early childhood programs to strengthen the delivery of advocacy instruction and research investigating successful advocacy programs.

Early Childhood Preprofessional Programs

The findings in this study suggest that a reevaluation of early childhood programs is needed. The profession continues to regard advocacy as an important topic. However, the findings of this study indicate that there are few programs that consistently deliver a sequenced advocacy instructional program. The researcher recommends that institutions that prepare early childhood preprofessionals reevaluate their programs and develop a consistent and structured plan for delivering advocacy instruction to preprofessionals.

The analysis of the data in this study indicates that current advocacy instructional practices include advocacy strategies that promote professional roles and responsibilities and generally exclude strategies and skills that support public policy advocacy. Therefore the researcher recommends that program reevaluations include a focus on strategies to insure that all types of advocacy are included in planned instruction and advocacy activities.

Finally, information revealed in the literature and in this study indicates that early childhood preprofessionals need opportunities for meaningful advocacy activities and experiences to learn to advocate for children and families. The results of this study also indicate that teacher educators who participate at high levels of advocacy include more advocacy instruction in their courses. It is recommended that teacher educators explore creative ways to become more involved in advocacy and at the same time offer opportunities for student participation in advocacy activities.

Research Recommendations

Based on the findings of the present study, there are several recommendations for future research. The recommendations include an in-depth study of successful early childhood preprofessional programs that teach advocacy; replication of Lindamood's continuum of advocacy study; and a study of the implementation of the Brunson model for advocacy instruction.

The results of this study indicate that there are few preparation programs that have a consistent, planned approach for the delivery of advocacy instruction yet the profession values advocacy for children and families. This finding seems to suggest that there is a

need for an in-depth study of early childhood preparation programs that deliver planned, specific advocacy instruction in their preprofessional programs. A study of successful advocacy programs would help identify advocacy strategies that result in advocacy participation. The identification of proven strategies in successful programs would add to the body of knowledge about advocacy instruction and assist other early childhood preparation programs across the United States in the development of planned, specific advocacy instruction.

Additional research is needed to determine appropriate advocacy activities for preprofessional early childhood professionals that will assist them in the development of advocacy skills. Lindamood (1995) has suggested a continuum of advocacy involvement that engages professionals in increasing levels of involvement and commitment to advocacy. Previous studies indicate that teachers fear advocacy and do not believe that they have the knowledge or skills necessary for participation in advocacy (Lombardi, 1986; Brunson, 1997). Some teacher educators and leaders of early childhood organizations in this study suggested that advocacy may be a developmental process and preprofessionals must gradually learn advocacy skills. Therefore, the researcher recommends replication of Lindamood's study with groups of early childhood preprofessionals at various stages of their preparation program and a follow-up after they enter the profession. Using Lindamood's continuum of development, future researchers could enhance the field of early childhood preprofessional education through the identification of advocacy participation activities that successfully engage students in advocacy activities that lead to high levels of participation in advocacy activities.

A review of the literature indicates that there are few comprehensive models for advocacy instruction. The results of this study identified a need for early childhood programs to reevaluate their current approaches to advocacy and develop a comprehensive program for the delivery of advocacy instruction. In this study, the Brunson model for advocacy instruction has been suggested as a plan for advocacy instruction. Research on the implementation of this model is needed to determine if the advocacy sequence and instructional strategies suggested are effective. Studying groups of preprofessionals, given advocacy instruction and advocacy participation experiences over time, could open up a wide variety of research opportunities to explore the advocacy phenomenon. This new information would inform the early childhood profession about promising strategies that might help develop professionals who are prepared to advocate for children, families, and the profession.

Summary

The results of this study have shown that advocacy continues to be viewed by the profession as an important element in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals. Early childhood professionals who are equipped with the essential knowledge needed to participate in advocacy for children and families will be able to speak up for the needs and rights of the children and families of today. When those professionals who are in a position to know about the needs of young children become advocates for children and families, their circles of influence will increase and changes necessary for the health and well-being for all children will occur.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

A Matter of Opinion:
Evaluating PreProfessional Advocacy Training Practices

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions apply:

An early childhood advocate is a person who speaks on behalf of children and works beyond their professional assignment, in the wider social community, to bring about changes that will result in better educational and social conditions for young children and their families. Child advocates "speak up" and "reach out" to change the circumstances of children's lives.

The term preservice professional refers to a person who is in an undergraduate preparation program seeking a two-year or four-year degree to become a teacher of young children.

Preprofessionals have not yet entered the early childhood teaching profession.

PART 1

Directions: Please supply the following information by circling the responses that apply to you.

1. Do you currently teach undergraduate early childhood preprofessional preparation courses?

   Yes No

   If no, have you taught undergraduate early childhood preprofessional preparation courses in the last 3 years? Yes No

   If no, please write in your current position and return the questionnaire for response return tabulation.

   _____

2. Is your institution a 2-year or 4-year institution? 2 year 4 year

3. In what state do you teach? _____

4. What preprofessional undergraduate early childhood education courses do you teach?

	Teach		Is it Required?	
a. Foundations of Early Childhood	Yes	No	Yes	No
b. Introduction to Early Childhood Education	Yes	No	Yes	No
c. Child Growth and Development	Yes	No	Yes	No
d. Curriculum/Methods Courses	Yes	No	Yes	No
e. Home, School, Community Relationships	Yes	No	Yes	No
f. Practicum in Early Childhood Education	Yes	No	Yes	No
g. Student Teaching Seminar	Yes	No	Yes	No
h. Advocacy	Yes	No	Yes	No

Other (Please list):
_____ Yes No

Do you use a specific advocacy textbook/s in any of the courses you teach?
Yes No

If yes, please list the textbook/s.

_____

PART 2

Directions: Below is a list of advocacy skills and strategies for advocacy training. Considering the *early childhood preparation course/s you teach,* please indicate the extent to which you include each item. Please respond to each item by *circling the response* that best describes your current practice.

Please respond to each item independently of the others.

5. To what extent do you include the following *advocacy skills* and *activities* in the course/s you teach?

	Frequently	**Sometimes**	**Rarely**	**Never**
Effective communication skills	1	2	3	4
Development of interpersonal skills	1	2	3	4
Understanding of the professional role	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of current issues and events that affect children, families and the profession	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of the conditions of children and families in society	1	2	3	4
Public policy affecting children, families and programs	1	2	3	4
Code of ethics as it relates to advocacy	1	2	3	4
Definition of advocacy and advocate	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of the political process	1	2	3	4
How to communicate with legislative representatives	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of professional organizations that support children	1	2	3	4
Advocacy issue debates	1	2	3	4
Advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences	1	2	3	4
Position papers on policy issues	1	2	3	4
Joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession	1	2	3	4
Volunteer activities to support children and families	1	2	3	4
Donations to groups that support children and families	1	2	3	4

Writing letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families	1	2	3	4
Letters/phone calls/visits to legislators/policy makers	1	2	3	4
Utilize the internet for legislative updates/information on child issues	1	2	3	4

6. About how much total class time in the early childhood education course/s you teach is devoted to *instruction in advocacy and*/or explicit, planned, discussion of *advocacy issues* that arise in early childhood education?

   0-3 hours 4-8 hours 9-14 hours 15-21 hours more than 21 hours

PART 3

Directions: Below is a list of reasons for including or not including advocacy information/instruction in the early childhood preparation course/s you teach. Considering the *early childhood preparation course/s you teach*, rank the following reasons for including or not including advocacy with the most important reason #1, the second most important #2, the third most important #3, etc. Rank each question in part 3 that applies to your current situation. Please rank all items in each question.

7. I include advocacy information/instruction in the early childhood preparation course/s I teach because:
   Rank 1-6 with # 1 the most important

   _____ It is important to the profession

   _____ It is required by the code of ethics

   _____ It is required by my institution

   _____ It is a professional responsibility

   _____ It is a moral responsibility

   _____ It is important for children and families

8. Place a check beside the statement that best describes your situation and then rank the responses.

_____ I do not include advocacy in my early childhood preparation course/s I teach because:

_____ I do not include as much advocacy as I would like in my early childhood preparation course/s I teach because:

Rank 1-7 with # 1 the most important

_____ Time limitations

_____ Overwhelming nature of responsibilities of early childhood professionals when entering the profession

_____ Too much required content knowledge in my courses

_____ Not a critical component in the early career of early childhood professionals

_____ Maturity of students when they take my courses

_____ Other content is more important in the preparation of early childhood professionals

_____ Not a state requirement for teacher certification

PART 4

Directions: Below is a list of advocacy skills, strategies, and issues for advocacy training. Though similar to a previous section, this information will assist in establishing priorities for advocacy training. Read each statement and indicate *your opinion* about the *importance* of each item *in advocacy training for preservice professionals.* Please respond to each item by *circling the response* on the grid that best describes your *opinion*.

Please respond to each item independently of the others.

9. How important do you consider each of the following advocacy skills in the preparation of early childhood preprofessionals?

	Very Important	**Somewhat Important**	**Not too Important**	**Not at all Important**
Effective communication skills	1	2	3	4
Development of interpersonal skills	1	2	3	4
Understanding of the professional role	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of current issues and events that affect children, families and the profession	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of the conditions of children and families in society	1	2	3	4
Public policy affecting children, families and programs	1	2	3	4
Code of ethics as it relates to advocacy	1	2	3	4
Definition of advocacy and advocate	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of the political process	1	2	3	4
How to communicate with legislative representatives	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of professional organizations that support children	1	2	3	4
Advocacy issue debates	1	2	3	4
Advocacy journals or logs reflecting advocacy experiences	1	2	3	4
Position papers on policy issues	1	2	3	4
Joining professional organizations to stay informed about the profession	1	2	3	4
Volunteer activities to support children and families	1	2	3	4
Donations to groups that support children and families	1	2	3	4
Writing letters to the editor or articles in support of children and families	1	2	3	4

Letters/phone calls/visits to legislators/policy makers	1	2	3	4
Utilize the internet for legislative updates/information on child issues	1	2	3	4

10. How important is it to you that early childhood preprofessional teachers learn about:

	Very Important	**Somewhat Important**	**Not too Important**	**Not at all Important**
Public policies that impact children	1	2	3	4
Pending legislation that impacts children	1	2	3	4
Administrative policies that impact children	1	2	3	4
Mandates that impact children and learning	1	2	3	4
Quality child care	1	2	3	4
Social services available for families	1	2	3	4
Resources for children and families in need	1	2	3	4

PART 5

Directions: Below is a list of advocacy activities. For this study, an early childhood advocate is a person who speaks on behalf of children and works beyond their professional assignment to bring about changes that will result in better educational and social conditions for young children and their families.

11. During the past year, which of the following advocacy activities did you *personally demonstrate* in your professional life?

Please respond to all items.

Voted in a general election	Yes	No
Visited public officials on behalf of children	Yes	No
Spoke to a group on behalf of the profession	Yes	No
Made a monetary contribution to help children, families	Yes	No
Served on a board that benefits children	Yes	No
Held office in organization that serves children, families	Yes	No
Wrote a letter to a legislator on behalf of children	Yes	No

Called a legislator on behalf of children	Yes	No
Spoke to a community group on behalf of children's rights or needs	Yes	No
Informed others about the needs or rights of children	Yes	No
Volunteered time to work for the rights/needs of children	Yes	No
Organized/participated in a service project that benefited children	Yes	No
Wrote a letter/article (to newspaper or magazine) on behalf of children	Yes	No
Invited someone to join a professional group that supports children and families	Yes	No
Donated time, money or items to a group serving children/families	Yes	No

Other

_____

Please give an example of the most meaningful advocacy activity in which you have participated.

_____

_____

PART 6

Directions: Please answer the questions below to describe your situation. This information will only be used to describe the responding group and to compare group responses.

12.

Your gender
____ Male
____ Female

Your age
____ under 30
____ 30-40
____ 41-50
____ 51-60
____ over 60

Your ethnicity
____ African American
____ Hispanic American
____ Asian American
____ European American
____ Other

Years of experience in current position
____ 1-3
____ 4-7
____ 8-15
____16 or more

How many years of experience do you have in your current position? _____

13. Number of students enrolled in your college/university:

_____Less than 5,000 _____5,000-10,000 _____11,000-20,000
_____21,000-30,000 _____31,000-40,000 _____41,000-50,000
_____Greater than 50,000

14. How many years has your early childhood education program been in existence?

_____0-5 years _____6-10 years _____11-15 years

_____16-20 years _____21-25 years _____25 + years

15. In which of the following national early childhood professional organizations are you currently a member? Check all that apply.

_____National Association for the Education of Young Children
_____Association for Childhood Education International
_____National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators
_____American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators
_____Other _____

PART 7

Directions (optional): If you have additional comments or suggestions regarding advocacy training in preprofessional early childhood preparation programs, please state them in the space below or on the back of this page.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

Please mail the completed questionnaire in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Mary Nelle Brunson
Stephen F. Austin State University
Box 6175
Nacogdoches, Texas 75962

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (940) 565-3940.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Telephone Interview Protocol

Leaders of Professional Organizations
in the field of
Early Childhood Education

Name _____
Contact Information _____
Organization _____
Office held _____

In order to insure the accurate collection and reporting of the data, it is necessary to record our interview. Do I have your permission to record this telephone interview? Yes No

Read to respondent:

Early childhood teacher preparation is a wonderful profession with many dedicated professionals producing highly qualified preservice teachers, especially given the constraints under which we are currently working.

One of the growing demands of our professional organizations is for preservice teacher preparation programs to prepare teachers trained to be advocates on behalf of children, families, and the profession. What is missing from this call to prepare advocates is a clearly articulated framework for advocacy training.

I am conducting a study to determine to what extent early childhood teacher education programs are including advocacy in course content and to identify the advocacy skills taught in such programs. A part of the study involves identifying what leaders in the field of early childhood believe preservice preparation programs should be doing to prepare future professionals to advocate for children and families. This interview asks several questions about your opinions regarding advocacy. This interview will take approximately 15 minutes.

This is a sensitive issue, therefore your participation is voluntary and your responses will be confidential. I will be the only person to see and report the data.

As a leader in the field of early childhood, your participation is important to help identify the needs of the early childhood profession. Do you understand that your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss? Do you wish to participate in the study? Yes No

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions apply:

An early childhood advocate is a person who speaks on behalf of children and works beyond their professional assignment, in the wider social community, to bring about changes that will result in better educational and social conditions for young children and their families. Child advocates "speak up" and "reach out" to change the circumstances of children's lives.

The term preservice professional refers to a person who is in an undergraduate preparation program seeking a two-year or four-year degree to become a teacher of young children.

Preprofessionals have not yet entered the early childhood teaching profession.

1. What is your present job assignment?

2. What are your education credentials?

_____ BA or BS	Certifications	_____ Teacher	
_____ MA or MS		_____ Educational Leadership	
_____ Doctorate		_____ Early Childhood	

Other _____

3. How important is it to you that early childhood professionals be trained in advocacy issues/practices in their undergraduate coursework? Explain.

4. Do you feel that preservice early childhood professionals are adequately trained in their undergraduate courses to be advocates for children and families? Explain.

5. What do you perceive as the benefits of an advocacy training program in undergraduate coursework?

6. What do you think should be included in early childhood preservice preparation programs to prepare future educators to advocate for children?

7. I am going to read to you a list of advocacy issues and skills. Please tell me how important you consider each of the following components in advocacy training for preservice professionals?
Please rate each item according to the following criteria:

1 Very Important 2 Somewhat Important 3 Not Very Important 4 Not at all Important

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not very Important	Not at all Important
Effective Communication skills	1	2	3	4
Development of Interpersonal skills	1	2	3	4
Understanding of the professional role	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of current issues related to children, families and the profession	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of the conditions of children and families in society	1	2	3	4
Legal issues related to children and family Programs	1	2	3	4
Public Policy affecting children, families and programs	1	2	3	4
Code of ethics as it relates to advocacy	1	2	3	4
Definition of advocacy and advocate	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of the political process	1	2	3	4
How to communicate with legislative representatives	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of professional organizations that support children	1	2	3	4
Public policies that impact children	1	2	3	4
Pending legislation that impacts children	1	2	3	4
Administrative policies that impact children	1	2	3	4
Mandates that impact children and learning	1	2	3	4
Quality child care	1	2	3	4
Social services available for children and families	1	2	3	4
Resources for children and families in need	1	2	3	4

8. What do you feel is most important for preservice professionals to learn about advocacy in their undergraduate preparation programs?

9. Do you have any other comments regarding this study?

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